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Mourners renew allegiance to Assad

DAMASCUS (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of people poured into the streets of Damascus on Tuesday to renew their allegiance to their president, Hafez Al Assad, and express their grief over the death of his eldest son 11 days ago. Basil Assad, 31, who had been billed as his father's likely successor, was killed in a car accident Jan. 21 and buried the next day in the family's hometown of Qordahah, in northwestern Syria. The Syrian president, who had been receiving condolences in Qordahah, was due back in the capital Tuesday and the Damascus headquarters of his Baath Party called for a mass rally to greet him. Officials refused to say when the president would arrive in Damascus, and the three-hour parade ended without an appearance by Mr. Assad at the Ommayyad Square, in the heart of the city, where the state media said 1.5 million people had gathered. Other senior government officials, led by vice-presidents Abdul Halim Khaddam and Zuhair Mohseni, as well as Abdullah Al Hamar, the assistant secretary-general of ruling Arab Baath Socialist Party, took part in the rally. Church bells tolled and loudspeakers atop mosque minarets blared verses from the Koran as the procession got under way.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الراي.

Olmert plans more settlements

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Jerusalem's Israeli mayor, Ehud Olmert, has cleared the way for settling more Israelis in the heart of Arab East Jerusalem. The municipality said Tuesday a city planning committee had approved Mr. Olmert's request to relocate the site of an Arab girls school on the Mount of Olives and allow a Jewish seminary to establish a housing project instead. It said the girls school would be built on another spot on the Mount of Olives. Palestinians view the settlement of more Jews in East Jerusalem as a violation of the September peace accord which stated that the two sides would negotiate the future of the Holy City after two years. Palestinians accuse Mr. Olmert, a former minister for the opposition Likud Party who ousted veteran Teddy Kollek in November, of plans to bring thousands of Jews into East Jerusalem. Mr. Kollek, who backed settlement of about 150,000 Jews around East Jerusalem during his 26 years in office, opposed the seminary, insisting that Jewish settlement in the midst of Arab neighbourhoods would only worsen tensions.

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AMMAN WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1994, SHA'BAN 21, 1414

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King receives Cable from Hrawi

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday received a cable from Lebanese President Elias Hrawi offering condolences over the assassination in Beirut of Jordanian diplomat Nayeb Imran Maaytah. Mr. Hrawi stressed that his country denounced "acts of violence and rejects any attempt to undermine the good and brotherly relations between Lebanon and Jordan or to tamper with the security and stability in Lebanon." Mr. Hrawi said he had requested the Lebanese authorities concerned to coordinate with the Jordanian authorities to uncover the identity of the assassins of Mr. Maaytah.

Arrow missile could be launched this year

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel plans to launch by the end of the year a U.S.-funded missile designed to intercept ballistic missiles such as the Scuds fired by Iraq in the Gulf war, an Israeli official said on Tuesday. The successful Arrow 2 would become the first weapon developed specifically to counter Scuds. "The plan now is by the end of this year to launch the Arrow 2, which is now in an advanced state of development," said the official. But the Arrow 2 must first overcome technical glitches that have plagued its troubled predecessor Arrow 1, whose disappointing tests prompted U.S. calls for the project's cancellation.

Envoy named rights commissioner

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Ecuador's U.N. envoy, Jose Ayala Lasso, was named Tuesday to fill the newly created post of U.N. high commissioner for human rights, first proposed more than 45 years ago. His nomination, by Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, is virtually certain to be endorsed by the General Assembly.

Envoy says Cyprus rivals accept steps

NICOSIA (R) — A United Nations envoy said Tuesday the opposing sides in divided Cyprus had accepted in principle U.N.-proposed confidence building measures. "The next step will be to inform the (U.N.) secretary general of all these developments and then the secretary general will convey his views and suggestions on how we move on," U.N. Resident Representative Gustave Feissel told reporters after an hour-long meeting with Cyprus President Glafcos Clerides. "I'm sure that one of the key elements is that we move on speedily. Time is important, so that we can get along... with the main purpose of the whole business which is to reach an overall settlement," he added.

Court upholds Pan Am awards

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal appeals court has upheld jury awards to three relatives of people killed aboard Pan Am flight 103, the jetliner shredder in the skies over Scotland. The ruling Monday could result in the bankrupt but insured U.S. airline paying out hundreds of millions of dollars on 222 other claims. The court of appeals for the second circuit ruled two to one to uphold damages totalling nearly \$19 million, awarded in 1992 by a jury in U.S. district court in Brooklyn. The jury found that Pan American World Airways failed to prevent the bomb from being placed aboard the plane. The December 1988 explosion over Lockerbie, Scotland, killed 270 people.

U.S. central bank vice-chairman resigns

WASHINGTON (R) — The Federal Reserve Board announced on Wednesday that Vice-Chairman David Mullins was resigning from the central bank's board effective on Feb. 14. His unexpected departure gives President Bill Clinton a key second appointment to make to the Federal Reserve's board. The Federal Reserve's board said in an announcement Mr. Mullins would become a partner in a recently-formed investment management firm.

Arafat ready to sign accord, but Israel scales down hopes

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIAN leader Yasser Arafat said Tuesday he was ready to sign immediately an agreement reached with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on launching Palestinian autonomy.

But Israel said more time was needed to reach accord on its first troop pullout from the occupied territories.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres drew up a draft accord in talks in Davos, Switzerland, last weekend which has to be approved by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Mr. Arafat told a news conference at U.N. headquarters in Geneva that he was ready to sign the deal "immediately" but Israel had asked for a week to study it.

He and Mr. Peres, who are to meet again in Cairo Sunday, had agreed that it be known as the "Davos agreement."

"The withdrawal should begin immediately after the signature of the implementation agreement," Mr. Arafat said.

He warned that delays in signing it endangered the peace process.

Mr. Arafat, who was speaking after addressing the U.N. Human Rights Commission, added: "I hope I will be able to go to Gaza and Jericho as soon as the Israelis withdraw."

His comments contrasted with a downbeat view from Mr. Peres, who told Israeli radio from Washington: "A lot more time and patience are needed, but I remain convinced that we can reach a comprehensive agreement, without committing myself to any date."

"I did not want to get involved in drawing up an agreement hastily in Davos, I prefer-

Peres: PLO does not want a state

ISRAELI FOREIGN Minister Shimon Peres said Tuesday Yasser Arafat had told him he was not trying to build a Palestinian state but a confederation with Jordan.

Mr. Peres quoted Mr. Arafat as telling him and senior aides at a meeting on Saturday night in Davos: "I know I did not sign (an agreement on) an independent state but on self-government. Secondly I want you to know that we have a decision not to go in the direction of a Palestinian state but to go in the direction of confederation with Jordan whatever Jordan's position will be."

He said Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres, largely solved the issues of security for Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, the size of the Jericho autonomous region and control at border crossings to the occupied lands from neighbouring Arab states.

Israeli negotiator Yossi Sarid said that even if they solved one of the problems, such as control of border crossings, there would still be substantial areas to be negotiated.

Ahmad Tibi, an Arab adviser to Mr. Arafat, said the problem was that Mr. Rabin did not back the agreements reached in Switzerland.

"It seems that the head of the government... did not give his approval to matters that the Israeli delegation had earlier approved," Mr. Tibi told Israeli Radio.

"This situation has created an atmosphere of dissatisfaction on the Palestinian side because matters have been settled and later it became clear that it wasn't final," Dr. Tibi added.

Mr. Peres was due to brief U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington on Tuesday. Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin were to confer on the talks when Mr. Peres returned

later in the week.

On Monday, Mr. Peres told a Jewish group in Florida he still expected an accord early this year. The withdrawal was due to have begun on Dec. 13. Mr. Sarid said it could still be completed by an April 13 deadline.

Israeli media said army chief Ehud Barak had reservations about concessions Mr. Peres made on security, but Mr. Beilin said negotiators would not put Israeli security at risk and the compromises were for the most part symbolic.

Israel's daily Yediot Aharanot reported that military chiefs, including Gen. Barak, felt that Israel was making too many concessions over security, "which could make the army's task of protecting Israeli civilians in the territories much more difficult."

However, Mr. Peres insisted that he had not given way over security issues.

Mr. Beilin said a comprehensive agreement will take several weeks: "But it will be possible to sign quickly a section of this accord covering central issues such as the security of settlements, the size of the autonomous Jericho area and control of crossing points," between Gaza and Egypt, and Jericho and Jordan.

PLO chief negotiator Nabil Shaath said Monday that the two sides "managed to resolve all problems concerning Gaza, Jericho and the crossing points," but added: "I don't want to be too optimistic, because stumbling blocks sometimes emerge for reasons beyond our control."

A member of the Israeli delegation in talks with the

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A bedouin woman guards her flock next to the site of Nabi Moussa (tomb of Moses, seen in the background). The holy site is one of the points of discussion between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in their autonomy negotiations (AFP photo)

Saleh wants signing in Amman

SANAA (AP) — President Ali Abdullah Saleh has turned down an Arab League offer to host in Cairo the signing of a national reconciliation charter to end his feud with Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh.

Mr. Saleh said he preferred King Hussein's offer to hold the signing ceremony in Amman, the official Yemen news agency SABA, reported Monday.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Salem Bassindawh conveyed Mr. Saleh's regrets to Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid, according to SABA.

It said members of the dialogue committee which drew up the charter wanted the ceremony in Amman. It is expected to be held on Feb. 6 or 7, although a date has not officially been announced.

(See related story on page 10)

Ekeus offers no clue to plan to lift sanctions on Iraq

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — Chief U.N. weapons inspector Rolf Ekeus said Tuesday that Iraq was cooperating on a plan to monitor its weapons capabilities, but he would not say when an embargo on Iraqi oil sales should be lifted.

Mr. Ekeus said any recommendation for the lifting of the embargo depended on "how things happen on a day to day basis and how things are working."

He added, however, that "... the impression from our experts is that things are going quite well, so, we'd like to encourage Iraq to continue on that line... It's deeds (that count)."

The United Nations imposed an economic blockade on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and occupied the emirate for seven months.

Before Iraq can again sell oil, its main source of foreign exchange, the U.N. Special Commission must certify to the Security Council that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations to declare and destroy prohibited weapons and accept their long-term monitoring.

Last November, Iraq reversed its previous position and acknowledged U.N. Resolution 715, which commits it to long term monitoring of its weapons programmes.

Since then, Baghdad has increased demands that the economic blockade be lifted.

An Iraqi official on Tuesday charged that U.S. President Bill Clinton was "blackmailing" Baghdad by insisting on a string of conditions before the sanctions could be lifted.

Mr. Clinton is seeking "to impose political conditions simply to prolong the unjust embargo," said Saad Kassem Hammudi, a member of the ruling Baath Party's foreign affairs committee.

Mr. Hammudi argued that acceptance of long-term monitoring was enough "to wipe out all fears" over Iraq's weapons.

"Starving the Iraqi people contradicts the claims of the American president on (the defence of) human rights," he said, referring to the rocketing food prices in Iraq due to the embargo.

Mr. Clinton expressed concern Monday that Iraq was still trying to stockpile weapons of mass destruction, and put tough conditions on removing international sanctions on Baghdad (see page 10).

(Continued on page 5)

Bomb explodes at Zarqa cinema; at least two injured

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A bomb exploded at a movie theatre showing a soft pornographic film in Zarqa on Tuesday, injuring two people, one of them seriously, police and eyewitnesses said. The blast occurred only six days after a similar explosion at a downtown Amman movie house.

An Interior Ministry statement said Tuesday's explosion was at Salwa theatre in the main street of Zarqa at 1.55 p.m. and identified the injured as Jordanian Eid Saleh Al Jahalin, whose condition was described as critical, and Hanafi Mohammad Saeed, an Egyptian, said to be in a semi-serious condition.

Mr. Jahalin's injuries were mostly on the lower half of his body, particularly his legs, witnesses said. Mr. Saeed appeared to have hurt himself by tripping himself while trying to get out of the cinema in panic after the blast, they said.

Both were rushed to the military hospital in Zarqa, an industrial city 20 kilometres northeast of Amman.

Police cordoned off the area, which also houses two other movie theatres. No fire was triggered by the blast.

Around 50 people were reportedly inside the Salwa theatre at the time of the explosion, watching what people in the area said was a foreign-language film with explicit sex scenes. The billboard outside said an English-language movie was being shown, according to the witnesses.

Bashir Al Majali, deputy police chief of Zarqa, said the explosion was caused by a bomb similar to the one that went off at Amman's Rivoli theatre on Jan. 16. The Rivoli was showing a semi-

pornographic Turkish film when the bomb tore through the street level movie house.

"This seems to be a repetition of the Amman blast; the same method and the same kind of bomb," he told reporters, adding that the device was placed near the projection room as the case was with the Rivoli incident.

But, he said, "there is no evidence of any group responsible for the two incidents."

Some of the witnesses who saw the damage inside the theatre said that the projection room wall had a large hole, equipment was demolished, parts of ceiling had come down and the last rows of chairs were dislodged — features almost identical to the post-blast scene at the Rivoli.

The similarity of the two explosions also set back suggestions that a personal feud was the motive for the blast at the Rivoli and strengthened the theory that the attacks could be the work of a group or an individual who objected to the nature of the films that the theatre was showing.

Jordanian censorship regulations ban pornographic and X-rated movies, but a few theatres have always managed to elude the authorities. Many of them have records of being fined and asked to close down for a few days.

Both the Rivoli and Salwa explosions were caused by crude homemade bombs similar in nature to devices discovered at other places in the past, including liquor stores.

This pointed the finger in the direction of religious extremists who oppose what they consider to be socially and culturally improper movies for a conservative society.



A scene from the shattered backdrops of the Salwa Cinema and (down) bystanders watch ambulances removing the injured from Tuesday's blast at the movie house (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)



An explosion more than a year ago at a cinema in the Baqaa refugee camp was at that time reported to have been caused by a planted "homemade" bomb. But police said a gas cylinder had exploded in the cafeteria of the movie house.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF), a leading advocate of eliminating Western cultural influences from Jordanian society, has condemned the Rivoli blast saying violence was not the means to stop practices incompatible with traditions of Jordan's society.

Shot fired during Rafsanjani speech

BEHESHT-E ZAHRA, Iran (Agencies) — A lone gunman was wrestled to the ground after firing shots into the air as Iran's president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, addressed thousands gathered for the Islamic revolution's 15th anniversary celebrations.

No one was hurt, according to the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

Shouts of "Marg bar America," Farsi for death to America, and "Hail Rafsanjani," hail Rafsanjani, rose from the crowd after five pistol shots echoed inside the gold-domed, chandeliered shrine of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, hero of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The seated mass of women, draped head-to-foot in black chadors, cavernous shrine at the Behesht-e Zahra cemetery, 32 kilometres south of Tehran.

Eyewitnesses said men in the audience pinned the gunman to the ground and disarmed him. Security guards who rushed to arrest him within minutes found in his possession "forged student, police and press cards," IRNA reported.

IRNA said a security officer at the shrine identified the 26-year-old gunman only by the first name of "Kourosh." IRNA reported.

It quoted the security officer, identified as Major Panahi, as saying the man "did not plan to assassinate any specific per-

son. Rather, he meant to terrorise people and spoil the ceremonies."

"As the man pulled out the pistol, the crowd rushed towards him and pushed the pistol barrel towards the air," the officer told IRNA. "But four bullets were fired and hit the shrine's ceiling."

"I had no intention of killing anyone and only wanted to create panic and overshadow the event," the suspect was quoted as saying.

The shots were fired from a low-calibre U.S.-made pistol, according to IRNA.

Mr. Rafsanjani, standing 50 metres away from the incident, kept his composure and did not interrupt his speech given at the shrine in southern Tehran.

"There was nothing to worry about," Mr. Rafsanjani told Tehran Radio later.

"It was a long distance from the stand. First I thought it was a light bulb exploding, then it became evident it was a gun shot," he said.

Iran's Islamic leaders were the targets of several assassination attempts in the early days of the revolution but no major incidents have been reported in the past 10 years.

Mr. Rafsanjani, who was shot in the stomach in 1981 by members of the anti-Khomeini Mujahadeen-e-Khalq group, said when he resumed his

(Continued on page 5)

Israeli government kills health reform

TEL AVIV (AP) — A reform effort appeared to fizzle Monday when the cabinet withdrew a health insurance bill under pressure from the country's entrenched socialist institutions.

"Today, in effect, the government buried health insurance," Health Minister Haim Ramon told Israel Radio after the decision. He said he would resign at the next cabinet meeting Sunday.

The health plan, like one being drawn up by the Clinton administration, aimed at guaranteeing citizens basic medical services regardless of income or employment status and making health care more costly for the young and healthy and less expensive for the sick and elderly.

Its demise was a personal defeat for Mr. Ramon, a leader of the governing Labour party's free market-oriented young guard, as well as a setback for efforts to reform beleaguered but still dominant socialist holdovers from Zionism's early days.

The right-wing Likud charged Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who avidly supported health reform in his 1992 electoral campaign, betrayed voters by giving in to vested interests in the party.

Mr. Ramon's proposal, which earlier this month easily passed the first of three needed approval votes in parliament, requires Israel to pay a health tax of 4.9 per cent of their income — about \$650 per working person annually.

Most people currently pay a similar amount to various "sick funds" — plans that run clinics and in some cases fund hospitalisation. But none are required to accept all applicants, and an estimated 350,000 Israelis are uninsured.

Under Mr. Ramon's plan the government would distribute the tax revenue among the clinics in a way that would favour the most needy, said health ministry spokeswoman Rachel Bluestein.

The main opposition came from the Histadrut, the trade union federation that represents 60 per cent of the two million-member work force and owns Kupat Holim Clalit, the largest health plan but one that relies heavily on government subsidies to stay afloat.

Currently all Kupat Holim members must be dues-paying Histadrut members — a source of guaranteed income for the union that Mr. Ramon's bill would have eliminated.

Mr. Ramon's critics maintained that ending subsidies to Kupat Holim Clalit and under-cutting Histadrut funding could kill both.

Mr. Ramon argues the union, a pillar of the Zionist movement, had become a bloated and self-serving bureaucracy. Through ownership of various industries, he contended, the Histadrut blurs the line between representing workers and employing them.

At a party congress called Monday to appease Histadrut functionaries who still form the bulk of active Labour members, Mr. Ramon predicted the party will lose votes because of its association with the widely unpopular union.

Mr. Rabin argued that he could not leave the Histadrut without funding.

The congress called on the government to amend the bill to divert part of the health tax revenue to the Histadrut and enshrine in law the linkage between health coverage and union dues.

Energy Minister Amnon Rubinstein, who voted against what he termed "the Bolshevik proposal" in the cabinet, said he expected intentions to submit a revised bill to face away because it stood little chance of passing in parliament.

Agriculture Minister Yaakov Tsuri maintained Israel's health care was exemplary. "We must reform without destroying what we have," he said.

The Likud, meanwhile, announced plans to submit to parliament its own health reform bill identical to Mr. Ramon's original. That would embarrass most Labour legislators who supported the plan initially.

Mr. Rabin's turnaround drew almost unanimous media criticism characterised by the Maariv daily's editorial entitled "The dinosaurs' victory." A cartoon in the Jerusalem Post showed government leaders interrupting a transfusion and shouting: "Hold it — I believe he's not a member of the Histadrut."



FAX TO GOD: The Israeli Bezek phone company's delivery man squeezes messages sent by fax on the western wall in occupied Jerusalem. Hundreds of messages land everyday at the site as the one-year-old Bezek operation permits believers to get, according to a Bezek spokesman, "in touch with God" without visiting the Holy City (AFP photo)

Iran, hit by economic woes, celebrates revolution

By Alex Efty
The Associated Press

TEHRAN — With lights and decorations, Iranians began a week of celebrations Monday to mark the 15th anniversary of the Islamic Republic.

Behind the festivities, though, were fears that an economic crisis was threatening the republic's survival.

President Hashemi Rafsanjani called the 1979 Islamic revolution, which toppled Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and inaugurated Muslim fundamentalism, was "the greatest transformation in the world this century."

The Iranian capital was festively lit and festooned with bunting and posters hailing the revolution and its spiritual leader, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Concerts, sporting events and fireworks displays were planned.

But the fanfare will do little to cheer the many Iranians forced to work one or two extra jobs to make ends meet as rampant inflation eats into their paychecks.

Iran's oil-dependent economy has suffered tremendously in recent months amid a collapse in world oil prices, stripping the state of revenues used to maintain wel-

fare subsidies and modernise rusting state industries.

Economic mismanagement has also saddled Iran with a foreign debt estimated to exceed \$30 billion and sparked murmurs of public discontent.

Many politicians and media have been outspoken in their criticism of the government's economic policies.

The economic crisis "is bound to have political implications," said Sadegh Samii, a Tehran publisher. "This is bound to happen to any government that cannot satisfy its people."

Rajaei Khorassani, a parliamentary deputy and former ambassador to the United Nations, conceded there was popular dissatisfaction.

"People have every right to want to change the government, but I don't believe people have lost faith in the ideals of the revolution," he said.

"We should be able to feed our people... the country is extremely rich. The reason we haven't been able to do so is mainly due to mismanagement. If the right people are chosen for the right job we shouldn't have any problem," he said, without naming names.

The open criticism of the government is symptomatic of a more tolerant atmosphere since the early years of the revolution.

Women must still wear chadors — head-to-toe black veils — in public in accordance with strict Muslim custom. But many also wear lipstick and makeup and allow tufts of hair to slip out of their head scarves.

The guards who imposed such strictures, and used to be ever present on the main shopping streets, are hardly in evidence now.

And despite the economic slump, Iranian shoppers these days are offered an assortment of commercial goods ranging from expensive French perfumes to the latest computer gadgetry to Western movie videos.

Strict customs and currency controls on entry points have been relaxed and many educated Iranians who left after the revolution have responded to government invitations to return.

"We still have a long way to go in political, economic, international and cultural developments," Mr. Khorassani said. But he added, "the Islamic revolution is a success and is here to stay."

Cooperation Council, Sheikh Fahim Al Qassimi, who was quoted on Monday as saying that the boycott card should be the last to be played by the Arabs at the negotiating table.

Sheikh Fahim told Arab journalists in London that Gulf states were not eager to end the boycott "because it will neither have a positive effect on the regional economies nor on the peace process."

Qatar's talks with Israel on possible gas supplies were widely seen outside the region as a signal that the boycott was breaking down.

But Qatari Oil Minister Abdullah Ben Hamad Al Attiyah was quoted on Sunday as saying that speculation about the deal was premature.

"We support maintaining the boycott economically, politically and diplomatically until the Palestinian people and all Arab countries regain their full rights and occupied lands," he was quoted as saying in Cairo.

"Only then would the road be open to... dealing with it (Israel) on gas or anything else," he added.

Revolution landmarks fade into past in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — The few remaining visible landmarks of the revolution which shook the Iranian capital in 1979 are gradually disappearing amid the banality of everyday life 15 years later, and give no indication of the turmoil which led to the birth of the Islamic republic.

The most prominent landmark, Tehran University, is no longer the scene of huge political and religious gatherings, which were a daily occurrence in the early years of the revolution.

The university's huge campus, where Friday prayers used to attract more than 100,000 people and the world's attention, now hosts only a few thousands regulars and official guests each week, and is rarely visited by foreign journalists.

Iranian leaders continue to use the forum to address the nation, but politics has figured less and less in their speeches in recent years and the usual slogans against the United States and Israel appear more ritualistic than born of conviction.

The campus, situated in the heart of the capital, is still a bastion of political militancy for radical students, but the government has been trying to contain such movements and channel them more towards the official protests against Iran's enemies.

Despite resistance from students, most of the revolutionary slogans have been wiped off the gray, dilapidated campus walls, along with the huge U.S. flags painted on walkways, on which students used to tread as an insult to the "great Satan."

"Students are here to learn, not to indulge in sloganeering," warned a university dean last year.

A few kilometres from the university stands the former U.S. embassy, where some 50 U.S. diplomats and other embassy staff were held hostage for 444 days, from November 1979 to January 1981, during the climax of the revolution.

The building is now used as a training centre for Iran's Revolutionary Guards (Pas-daran).

Every year on Nov. 4, the date the embassy was stormed, tens of thousands of Iranians from all over the country, mainly members of Islamic associations, hold anti-U.S. demonstrations outside the so-called "nest of spies."

But the event has lost its spontaneity since officials barred the students, instrumental in the embassy's seizure.

In western Tehran lies the huge Azadi (freedom) Square, which in the early years of the revolutionary attracted daily gatherings of up to one million people, rallying in support of the regime.

But the square and the surrounding area have now returned to normal, serving mainly as a picnic grounds of Tehranis.

Two or three times a year the area is cordoned off for occasions such as the revolutionary anniversary and army day.

In the south lies the Behesht-e Zahra cemetery, known in Iran as the "Lot of the Martyrs," which has been extended as a resting place for the thousands of victims of the revolution's bombings and terrorist attacks and the casualties of the 1980-1988 war with Iraq.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwaiti MP to lose immunity

KUWAIT (AP) — A Parliamentary committee has recommended that a deputy accused of assaulting a police officer who found him drunk with a mistress be stripped of legal immunity, a committee member said Monday. Deputy Ahmad Nassar Al Shraiaan has denied the accusations and welcomed a proposal to lift the immunity from prosecution he enjoys as a legislator in order to refute them. Yacoub Hayat, a member of parliament's legal and legislative committee, said the recommendation was agreed on Sunday. Parliament has one month to endorse it. Mr. Shraiaan would be the first member in the short history of Kuwait's parliament to lose legal immunity. Last November, crowds of spectators turned out to watch a raucous parliamentary session in which deputies accused the government of fabricating the allegations in order to discredit the legislature and disrupt democracy. The Kuwaiti emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, dissolved the legislature in 1986 for its criticism of government ministers. The body was reinstated in October 1992.

U.N. accused of sidelining Africa

ADDIS ABABA (AP) — President Meles Zenawi on Monday accused the United Nations of not allowing African nations to help end the unrest in Somalia. Mr. Meles made the comments at the opening of the meeting of a council of African foreign ministers, which normally discusses finances and management of the Organisation of African Unity. "As the council meets today, the U.N. Security Council is in the process of adopting another resolution on Somalia, which would have a major impact on future developments in the country," Mr. Meles said, without elaborating. Mr. Meles' complaint came the day an African officer, Zimbabwe's Mike Nyambuya, assumed his duties as deputy commander of U.N. forces in Somalia. The OAU has given the Ethiopian leader authority to negotiate a peaceful settlement in Somalia on its behalf. He and his Eritrean counterpart, Issaias Aferwerki, have met frequently with Somali clan leaders. Last December, Mr. Meles invited 15 Somali factions for peace talks in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. The talks failed.

Police arrest Kurdish militants

ISTANBUL (AP) — Police arrested 17 suspected militants of a previously unknown Kurdish group Monday and seized large quantities of weapons in raids in Istanbul. They belonged to an organisation called Kawa, named after a former Kurdish leader, and were suspects in several bombings in this city, police said. Seized in the raids were 13 automatic rifles, 92 hand grenades, four rocket-propelled grenades and tracer bullets, two handguns, two computers, fake ID cards and an unspecified quantity of printed propaganda material, the announcement said. It said the group apparently carried out its operations independently of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party, but with the same aim of attaining self-rule in Kurdish-dominated southeastern Turkey. A war waged by Kurdish rebels since 1984 has claimed more than 10,000 lives.

Iran to set up Afghan refugee camps

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran will help the Afghan authorities set up three camps for Afghan refugees in the western provinces of Herat, Nimroz and Farah, which border on Iran, an Interior Ministry official said here Monday. Director-General for Expatriate and Immigrant Affairs Ahmad Hussein, quoted by the official Islamic Republic News Agency, said the camps, capable of holding up to 15,000 people, would speed up the repatriation of refugees displaced by clashes between rival factions in Afghanistan. Mr. Hussein said the Iranian authorities had traced some 543,000 Afghans without identity papers, and they would have to leave for the camps within six months, with the assistance of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Some 800,000 Afghan refugees have already returned home from Iran since the communist government was toppled in Kabul in April 1992, and 700,000 others are expected to leave Iran this year, according to an agreement with the UNHCR, the official said. The Iranian authorities put at around two million the number of Afghan refugees still living in Iran.

Two Somalis drown off Kenyan coast

MOMBASA, Kenya (R) — Two Somalis drowned and 18 were missing after their boat capsized off the Kenyan coast near the tourist resort of Malindi at the weekend, Kenya police said. Coast province police officer James Munyua told reporters that two bodies had been recovered and rescue teams from the Kenya navy and the Kenya ports authority were searching for survivors or more bodies. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees official Bert Lerschoff, based in the port city of Mombasa, said 17 children and 15 adults had been rescued by fishermen or swum to safety. He said there were 52 Somalis travelling to Kenya on the boat. The cause of the capsizing was not known but such boats are often overcrowded.

Italy to increase presence in Gulf

ABU DHABI (AP) — Italy is planning to step up its naval presence in the Gulf to help maintain stability in the region, an Italian military official said Monday. Defence attaché Captain Maurizio Vacca spoke during a visit of two Italian battleships — the Sagittario and the Urania — to Abu Dhabi's Port Zayed. The four-day port call ended Tuesday. Italian Ambassador Giovanni Ferrero said Italy's intention to increase its Gulf presence was related to the navy decision to reduce its presence in Somalia, the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean. At present, Italy has no navy vessels stationed in the Gulf even though it contributed warships to the U.S.-led coalition that waged the Gulf war in 1992 to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The United States and Britain maintain a regular presence in the Gulf while France maintains warships in the Red Sea on the western flank of the Arabian Peninsula. Diplomats said Italy was expected to deploy two ships in the Gulf waters.

Arab boycott of Israel looks shaky but to stay

By Yousef Azmeel
Reuters

DUBAI — The Arab boycott of Israel may look shaky under heavy U.S. pressure but officials and diplomats in the region say it is unlikely to crumble until Israel withdraws from occupied Arab lands.

The 40-year boycott of Israel and firms with strong links to it is fraying at the edges.

The Gulf state of Qatar is talking to Israel about possible gas supplies.

Kuwait has eased some of the boycott rules to attract U.S. firms whose expertise is needed for its reconstruction.

And illicit trade is rife between the Jewish state and some of its Arab neighbours.

But the boycott, a highly emotive issue for many Arabs, remains official policy and a review by Arab League foreign ministers in March is likely to back Syrian demands that it should stay in force pending a final settlement with Israel.

"We should not speak of removing the boycott while Israel is still occupying Arab

lands," a Syrian official said after the league put the issue on the agenda of its next meeting following strong representations by U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown.

"Syria's position on the boycott, both primary (against Israel itself) and secondary or tertiary (against Israel's economic supporters) is that it should be discussed in the framework of a comprehensive peace settlement," he added.

Arab diplomats said that view had not changed after President Hafez Al Assad's meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Geneva on Jan. 16 and appears to be backed by Egypt, the only Arab state officially at peace with Israel.

They said that Syria would, if pushed, veto any decision to lift the boycott which has to be unanimous under league rules.

But Syria was not likely to be alone.

The diplomats said Egypt, which lifted the boycott when it signed a peace treaty with Israel 15 years ago, had privately told Arab partners they should stick with the boycott as a valuable bargain-

ing chip in peace negotiations with Israel.

Even the Saudi-led economic heavy-weights of the Gulf, who are under intense pressure from their U.S. allies to ease the boycott, are convinced the time is not ripe for it.

"The boycott is an emotive issue for both sides," a Western diplomat said.

ANALYSIS

"Israelis see it as a key to their security and say — how can we feel safe if the Arabs continue to reject our presence in their midst by maintaining the boycott," he said.

"But the Arabs ask — would you talk to your neighbour if he barged into your garden, built a fence around half the land and proclaimed a God-given right to own it," he added.

The U.S. Senate, where Israel has many friends, built up the pressure last Friday when it voted to ban U.S. military sales to countries that enforce the "secondary" boycott of firms that have major dealings with Israel.

The vote was clearly aimed at Gulf states dependent on U.S. weapons but the president was given wide powers to waive the ban's conditions. Western diplomats in the region said it was unlikely to be enforced at a time when U.S. firms were desperate for Gulf arms contracts worth some \$10 billion a year.

The Gulf states have not reacted to the vote publicly. But the Saudi daily Al Riyadh scoffed at it in a commentary on Sunday as ineffective when Gulf countries could easily obtain alternative supplies from companies in Western Europe and Russia eager for a share in the U.S.-dominated market.

"Imposing a ban on arms supplies makes no difference one way or the other when rival suppliers are available in the markets of Europe and Asia," said the daily that normally reflects government thinking.

Al Riyadh also described the boycott as an Arab bargaining card and said that any decision to end it would have to be unanimous. This view was shared by the secretary-general of the Gulf

Cooperation Council, Sheikh Fahim Al Qassimi, who was quoted on Monday as saying that the boycott card should be the last to be played by the Arabs at the negotiating table.

Sheikh Fahim told Arab journalists in London that Gulf states were not eager to end the boycott "because it will neither have a positive effect on the regional economies nor on the peace process."

Qatar's talks with Israel on possible gas supplies were widely seen outside the region as a signal that the boycott was breaking down.

But Qatari Oil Minister Abdullah Ben Hamad Al Attiyah was quoted on Sunday as saying that speculation about the deal was premature.

"We support maintaining the boycott economically, politically and diplomatically until the Palestinian people and all Arab countries regain their full rights and occupied lands," he was quoted as saying in Cairo.

"Only then would the road be open to... dealing with it (Israel) on gas or anything else," he added.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 7, Aqaba 18. Humidity readings: Amman 97 per cent, Aqaba 39 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Yousef Abdo 694916
Dr. Jamal Al Ja'bari 796460
Dr. Jamal Tash 794710
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 853446
Fire pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Ascoma pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644943
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
Nairookh pharmacy 623672
Najla pharmacy 847632

IBRD:
Dr. Ahmad Oam (—)
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 989601

Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power

Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642416
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mallat, J. Amman 656140
Palestine, Shamsi 664711/14
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 666127/27
The Islamic, Abdali 664164/6
Al-Abul, Abdali 777101/2
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Shamsi 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Ansal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikm Modern Hospital (09)989090
IBRD:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al Nafaa Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00 Jeddah (RJ)
09:15 London (RJ)
10:30 Athens (RJ)
10:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:50 Istanbul (RJ)
11:25 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
11:50 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:10 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:10 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
19:20 Rome (RJ)
23:10 Jeddah (RJ)
23:45 Cairo (RJ)

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Only
18:00 N.B.A. sport
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal De L'Histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Too Close for Comfort
21:10 Documentary "Special Treatment"
22:00 News in English
22:20 The Man Who Cried

PRAYER TIMES

..... Fajr
..... (Sunrise) Dhuha
..... Dhuhr
..... Asr
..... Maghrib
..... Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590, Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assumption International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Light Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Cold and cloudy weather conditions will prevail with a chance of scattered showers, and winds becoming westerly after. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy, winds becoming southerly active and seas rough.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 2 / 8
Aqaba 8 / 10
Deserts 3 / 10
Jordan Valley 7 / 16

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:05 Rome (AZ)
09:35 Cairo (MS)
09:45 Jeddah (SA)
10:30 Sanas (IY)
12:25 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:35 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PI)
18:15 Paris, Damascus (AF)
19:45 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

10:30 Rome (RJ)
10:30 Berlin, London (RJ)
11:00 Istanbul (RJ)
11:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
19:30 Colombo (RJ)
19:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh (RJ)
20:20 New Delhi (RJ)
20:30 Aden (RJ)
21:30 Aqaba (RJ)
22:45 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
23:45 Sanas (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:05 Beirut, Paris (AF)
06:25 Rome (AZ)
08:15 Beirut (ME)
10:25 Cairo (MS)
11:50 Sanas (IY)
12:50 Jeddah (RJ)
13:30 Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:45 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PI)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Majali reports on King's U.S. visit

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Tuesday heard a report by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on the outcome of His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the United States and the King's talks with President Clinton and other senior U.S. administration officials.

Dr. Majali who returned to Amman Saturday after accompanying the King on the U.S. visit, described the talks, which covered the peace process and issues of mutual concern to both countries as highly successful.

The Cabinet also heard a report by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan on the outcome of Jordanian delegation visit last week to South Africa.

The delegation, which was led by Speaker of the Senate Ahmad Lawzi and included Mr. Hassan, discussed the establishment of a Jordanian embassy in South Africa as well as educational and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Mr. Hassan said that the

visit ended with the signing of a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in several fields and covering the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Ahmad Akaleh reported to the Council of Ministers on the outcome of an international conference held in Buenos Aires to discuss environmental protection.

Mr. Akaleh, who led Jordan's delegation to that conference, outlined the Kingdom's contributions to the meetings and the subjects he raised with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

The Cabinet reviewed the government's official statement about the food and medicine situation in Jordan to be presented to the Lower House of Parliament Wednesday by Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas.

The council decided to form a committee chaired by Deputy Premier Ma'an Abu Nowar to conduct a study and prepare draft legislation on local government matters in Jordan.

Merchants request visiting Chinese trade team to improve policies, dealings with Jordan

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) business delegation arrived in Amman Tuesday to begin a three-day visit to Jordan and was immediately presented with several strong requests for improvement in China's trade policies and dealings with Jordan, at a meeting held at the Federation of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce (FJCC).

Mr. Riyad Al Sayfi, a member of the FJCC, told the members of the Chinese delegation that Jordanian businesspersons often face "a lack of fulfillment on the Chinese side when they sign contracts with Chinese firms. Chinese delegations have come here in the past, and many contracts were signed but not fulfilled."

He said that Jordanian businesspersons, who, in such cases had sought arbitration or legal recourse through the Chinese government, had faced a Chinese embassy in Jordan which had little power to aid them and a vast Chinese bureaucratic system whose legal channels were difficult, if not impossible, to reach and access.

"When we seek arbitration in such cases in China, we get no response from China. My main point is that if delegations come here and make contracts and do not fulfill them, then what is the point of their coming here in the first place?"

He said that more coordination was needed between arbitration committees in China and Jordan.

Tawfiq Kawa, a Jordanian shipping agent and also a member of the FJCC, said

that Jordanian merchants had to deal with antiquated and outdated ports and shipping facilities in China. "I hope that Chinese ports improve ... in the future," he said.

Ye Bing, the leader of the CCPIT delegation, agreed with Mr. Kawa, saying that a major problem that China now faced was that although its industry and economy had advanced dramatically in the last decade since free market reforms were introduced, its transportation network had not kept pace, and China was dealing with a "bottleneck effect" in importing and shipping its products to the outside world.

He said China plans in the future to put more emphasis on developing its transport sector.

Mr. Al Sayfi said that Jordanian merchants hoped to see more participation by China in Jordan's light industrial sector.

Under new rules put forth, he said, a foreign businessperson or firm could now legally hold 100% of a Jordanian business and had more freedom to manage and move the company as he/she chooses.

Mr. Asfour told the Jordan Times that the Chinese delegation's visit to Jordan was of especially high importance in the area of textiles.

"In the past few years, we have been expanding our textile industries and have begun to export our products to a number of countries. Any joint ventures in textiles with the Chinese would be a strong boost for Jordan because the Chinese are well-known world-wide for their excellence in textiles and

the Middle East. Jordan is also now undergoing restructuring of many of its rules and regulations for foreign and other investors."

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"In the past few years, we have been expanding our textile industries and have begun to export our products to a number of countries. Any joint ventures in textiles with the Chinese would be a strong boost for Jordan because the Chinese are well-known world-wide for their excellence in textiles and

have great prestige in that area. Their backing is important."

Since 1988, Jordan's imports from China have risen dramatically, from JD 16.8 million in 1988 to an all-time high of JD 52.1 million in 1992.

Jordanian exports to China, however, have remained stagnant, rising from JD 15.9 million in 1988 to JD 32.5 million in 1991, and then diving back down to a total of 14.0 million in 1992.

The figures available for the first two-thirds of 1993 showed JD 30.5 million for China and JD 15.7 million for Jordan.

China's exports to Jordan consist mainly of foodstuffs, chemicals and pesticides, plastic products and electrical household items. Jordan's exports to China consist mostly of potash and phosphate.

British envoy tours NHF weaving centre

AMMAN — British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Hinchcliffe Tuesday visited the Weaving Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) in the Hashimeiyeh village in Ma'an Governorate.

The ambassador, accompanied by several NHF officials, toured the facilities of the centre which was set up by the Jordan Design and Trade Centre (JDTCT) in 1992 as part of the weaving project in the south.

The Al Husseiniyeh centre, which received funding from the British government, employs 350 women who had no source of income before the project was implemented. The centre provides a monthly income of JD 50 to each of its employees in this small village in the southern desert.

Over 300 other women are employed by the weaving centre in Al Hashimeiyeh village. The Hashimeiyeh Centre is also supervised by the Jordan Design and Trade Centre under the weaving project for the south.

The JDTCT markets the products of the various centres that it has set up across the Kingdom under the National Handicrafts Development Project. While some of the handicrafts are sold locally, many products are exported to foreign markets where they have been recognised for their fine craftsmanship.

AMMAN (Petra) — A study on the workforce in the Kingdom prepared by the Ministry of Labour and released Tuesday revealed that only 50 per cent of non-Jordanian workers have valid work permits while the rest are working illegally.

The study, prepared by Mohammad Al Akel, director of the ministry's Workforce Affairs Department, said that 90 per cent of the non-Jordanian workers here are either Egyptians or Syrians, and the rest included Asian workers from China, Pakistan, India, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Turkey.

Most of the non-Jordanians are employed in construction, agriculture, and services sectors, the study pointed out.

Noting that by the end of 1993 the total Jordanian workforce was estimated at 600,000, the study said that the non-Jordanian workers accounted for nearly 22 per cent of the total number of workers employed in the local labour market.

Attributing the presence of non-Jordanian workers in the country to the unwillingness of Jordanians to take up unskilled or manual labour, the study said that the Kingdom's need to fill these jobs brought a great number of guest workers to Jordan in the 1970s.

It showed that in 1975 non-Jordanian workers numbered 376, the number rose sharply to 41,042 in 1979, to 143,519 in 1984 and to nearly 200,000 by the end of 1992.

While non-Jordanians were finding work in the country, at least 15 per cent of the local workforce was unemployed by the end of 1992, the study said.

Referring to the number of Jordanian workers employed in other countries, the study said that nearly 50,000 were employed abroad by 1975, but their numbers rose to more than 300,000 by 1987 and 350,000 by 1988, in Arab and non-Arab countries.

Iranian embassy reportedly begins staff reduction

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Iranian embassy has started reducing the number of its diplomats in Amman in line with a request by the Jordanian Foreign Ministry, diplomatic sources said Tuesday.

Officials said the request pointed out that the Iranian mission here had 19 diplomats in addition to an ambassador while the Jordanian embassy in Tehran had only one diplomat besides the ambassador.

A senior official had said last week that "there has to be a better balance in the diplomatic presence. It is not acceptable that we have only two diplomats in Tehran while Iran has 10 times that number in Amman, not to mention an almost similar number of non-diplomatic staff."

According to the sources, Tehran had been stalling on a Jordanian request to increase the Kingdom's diplomatic presence in the Iranian capital. As such, they said, Jordan had no

option but to request the Islamic republic to reduce the number of its diplomats in Amman.

Jordanian officials have made clear that the request had no political implications and described Jordanian-Iranian relations as good.

It was not clear how many of the 19 diplomats of the Iranian mission were asked to return home after the Jordanian request, forwarded last month. In addition to the accredited diplomats, the mission also has 15 non-diplomatic personnel and it was not immediately clear whether the embassy was planning any reductions in this category of staff.

No comment was available from the mission, and officials indicated they were waiting for a formal response through diplomatic channels.

At least three advertisements offering duty-free cars for sale, appearing in local newspapers this week were released by Iranian diplomats, presumably among those expected to leave Jordan, in

quiries found.

Western reports have suggested that the large number of Iranian diplomats in Amman was worrying Jordan, given that the Iranian ambassador, Ahmad Dastmalchian, was "active" in the 1979 Iranian student takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran and "participated in the planning" of the 1983 suicide attack on the U.S. mission in Beirut.

The reports also highlighted that Ambassador Dastmalchian, who took office in Amman in October, had played a key role in building the pro-Iranian Hizbollah group while he served in Damascus and later in Beirut.

His Majesty King Hussein was asked a question in this context in a Cable News Network (CNN) interview while he was in Washington last week.

The King replied: "Nothing has happened in that direction so far. And the ambassador is in Jordan and he's behaving like an ambassador should so far."

"But we are watching, obviously, the dimension of our relations with Iran. We would have liked them to be based on an agreement, clear at the highest levels, as to where the green lines are, where the red lines are, where the differences are. And I hope that this will come at some point. But in the meantime, we will not permit our country to be jeopardised in terms of its internal sovereignty."

Asked whether Iranian diplomats in Amman were "agitating," the King said: "I don't think they are at the moment. We haven't seen anything that would suggest that."

Jordan and Iran restored diplomatic relations in 1990 after 10 years of strain caused by Amman's support for Iraq in the 1980-88 war. Iran reopened its embassy in March 1991 and appointed the first ambassador in 13 years in October 1993. The Jordanian embassy in Tehran reopened in 1992 and the Kingdom's present ambassador, Yassin Istanbuli, took office a few months later.



PLANNING NEW HOUSING: Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) Director Yousef Hyasat (second from right) Tuesday signs one of four contracts with local firms to execute four housing and infrastructure projects in Zarqa and Ain Al Basha areas for a total of JD 3.3 million. Mr. Hyasat said that the future tenants will be low and limited income groups who have not before benefited from the department's projects.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

House panels meet on health issue

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Health and Public Safety Committee Tuesday had a meeting with former Health Ministers Zuhair Malhas and Farid Al Akasheh to discuss recent statements by Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas on the food and drug situation in the country. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Aref Bataineh, who is also a former health minister. Another meeting to discuss the same issue was held by the House Public Freedoms Committee. The committee listened to statements by President of the National Society of Consumer Protection Mohammed Obaidat, Society Secretary Abdul Fattah Al Kilani and Deputy Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh, who had served as health minister. The committee will continue discussions on the issue next week.

Woman found dead in Mafraq alley

AMMAN — Police in Mafraq are investigating the death of a 45-year-old woman whose body was dumped in an alley Monday, police reports showed. A 38-year-old man identified as F.A. told police he was leaving his house at 8:00 when he noticed the woman's body lying in the alley leading to his house. The dead woman, identified as Alia Suleiman, was taken to Al Mafraq Military Hospital, where doctors were trying to determine the cause of death.

American school wins 'honourable mention' in journalism contest

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The American Community School (ACS) in Amman recently won an honourable mention in the 1993 journalism contest sponsored by the European Institute for International Communication (EIIC) — Emerson Award for their monthly school publication "Scorpion Tales".

According to faculty advisor Beth Keene.

Twenty American schools from different parts of the world competed in the contest this year, Ms. Keene told the Jordan Times.

The ACS has been publishing the eight-page newspaper during the scholastic year for several years.

According to Ms. Keene, whose journalism class is responsible for producing "Scorpion Tales" but "it was the first time we competed in this contest," she added.

When Ms. Keene took over the ACS journalism class in 1992, she said, she felt there was a need to

change the newspaper style. She explained that previously "Scorpion Tales" was considered more of a newsletter. But two years ago, said Ms. Keene, the school started remodeling the paper, and covering a wide range of topics rather than limiting its contents to news of the ACS community.

For example, in its December '93 issue, "Scorpion Tales" carried a news item on Lower House of Parliament Deputy Taher Al Musri's Parliamentary victory over the Islamic Action Front candidate to become speaker of the House.

The paper also dedicates two pages to elementary and middle school activities.

Sports news also has its share of coverage with items on all sports events for all ACS teams, as well as a feature on "Athletes of the Month."

A recent editorial discussed the suffering of nations all over the world, while many people were getting

ready to celebrate Christmas. The editor reminded readers to appreciate what they have because, she wrote, "humans are priding themselves in their achievements and intelligence, yet never notice the destruction they leave behind them."

On the technical side, Ms. Keene said that introducing Apple computers was a big gain for the newspaper staff because it helped them learn the necessary computer skills as well as desk top publishing.

The staff is made up of the seven students in Ms. Keene's journalism class. They range in age from 14 to 17 and each one is responsible for editing and laying out one page of "Scorpion Tales".

The front page, said Ms. Keene, adopts a different policy whereby the staff is required to cover stories from outside the school community.

Ms. Keene said writing for the school newspaper is a good experience for the stu-

dents because it helps develop their writing skills and focus their educational interests after graduating from high school.

"The staff practice writing, editing and re-drafting their articles before they are published, and it helps improve their fundamentals of journalism, and encourages them to become life-long newspaper readers," she said.

With a circulation of 400 copies, the newspaper covers all kinds of school activities including sports, features, editorials and opinions, pot-pourri, grades news, politics and what Ms. Keene describes as the first read section headlined "Rumours by Gossip Queen."

"I enjoy teaching the class because unlike other classes we see a finished product at the end of each month," she said.

"I am really proud of what the 'Scorpion Tales' staff has accomplished, because they take it from the beginning to

SCORPION TALES

Volume II Number 4 March 1993 Editor: Rana Hussein

Many students will travel for winter holidays

Taher Al Musri defeats IAF candidate for House speaker

PTA brings Santa's Workshop to ACS

Semester exams approaching

All grade levels perform at two Christmas concerts

SC plans Christmas assembly

Inside

Temperatures to stay low — meteorologists

AMMAN (J.T.) — The effect of low atmospheric pressure on Jordan is expected to diminish (today) Wednesday and end by evening, according to the Department of Meteorology.

A department official said that more rain was expected early Wednesday and that temperatures were not expected to rise above 3°C at night and above 8°C during the day because a cold air mass was still affecting the country.

The department said that in the 24 hours that ended Tuesday morning rain fell in most parts of the Kingdom and that the vicinity of the University of Jordan received the highest amount (48 millimetres), while Shobak in the south received one millimetre.

Also according to the department, Salt in Balqa Governorate received 263.9 millimetres of rain since the start of the rainy season in Jordan.

This cumulative amount corresponds to 83 per cent of the total annual rate until the end of January, it noted.

The department said the northern Irbid Governorate received 172.7 millimetres of rain, corresponding to 70 per cent of the total annual rate until the end of January.

Department Director Ali Abanda said that the 40-day period, considered the coldest part of the year, ended Monday, January 31 with relatively poor rainfall in Jordan.

It was the warmest 40-day period of winters in the Kingdom in 70 years, with the maximum average temperatures registering about 10°C, said Dr. Abanda.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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On wrong track again

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has effectively closed the door on lifting or even relaxing the sanctions imposed on Baghdad when he told U.S. Congress Monday that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is still determined to develop nuclear weapons. This assessment came in spite of President Clinton's assurance to his nation that Iraq's nuclear weapons programme is "out of business" and Baghdad's official commitment to put its entire weapons programme including its nuclear capabilities, if any, under long-term international supervision.

Why then Washington still clings to its conviction that Iraq continues to covet nuclear and other mass destruction arsenal and therefore must be denied any relaxing of the punitive measures is something that goes beyond reasonable comprehension. State behaviour cannot be judged on metaphysical basis but rather on hard evidence unless of course there is no intention whatsoever to treat the Arab Gulf country differently no matter how far it goes to meet its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions. Since Iraq's mass destruction capabilities are for all intents and purposes "out of business," and will be monitored for as long as one can see, one fails to understand how Washington or anybody else for that matter can rightly guess the Iraqi intentions and find sinister plans in them.

The White House is also wrong in apportioning blame for the suffering of the Iraqi masses as a result of the sanctions solely on the Iraqi regime. Such a view is of little relief to the greater majority of Iraqis who have not been able to find or afford to buy basic medicines and food staples for over three years now, given the fact that the regime in Baghdad is solidly entrenched and has an effective grip on power, telling the people that they have only their leadership to blame is of no practical comfort. If pressure must continue to be applied against the Iraqi regime under all circumstances there is a good case for applying it in such a way as to minimise damage to the innocent people. Such a distinction between ruler and ruled could and should be made, and ways and means to give it effect is obviously not beyond the ingenuity of the western nations which still spearhead the hostile campaign against the country.

President Clinton was on stronger grounds when he called for the introduction of pluralistic democracy to the country as a condition for its full rehabilitation within the international community. Baghdad has yet to make significant movement in the direction of democracy and this is a source of alarm not only to Washington but also to the entire region, not to mention its own people. There is clearly no long-term solution to the problem in that country as long as its people are denied democracy and basic human rights. Meanwhile, however, no matter where the responsibility lies, the Iraqi people themselves must enjoy the right to feed themselves properly and find the necessary medicines to treat the sick among them.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

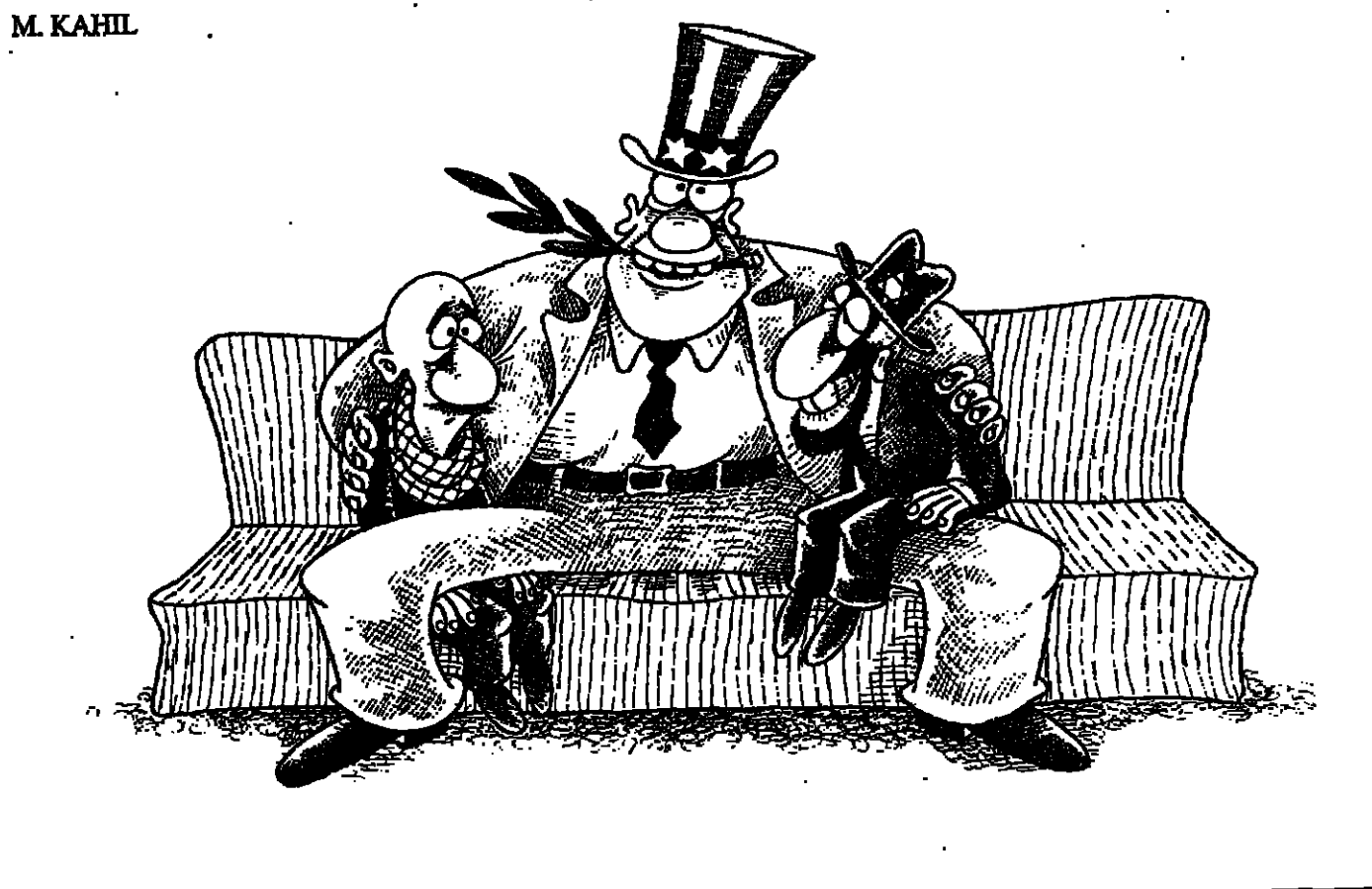
AL DUSTOUR Arabic daily welcomed the favourable signs from Davos about an agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Despite all the obstacles that have impeded an accord that could be applied immediately to pave the ground for the autonomy rule, it seems that now the road has been paved for such a development at the Davos parley between Mr. Arafat and Shimon Peres, said the paper. Jordan, for its part, welcomes this development because the Kingdom is totally committed to the peace option and hopes that the Davos talks would constitute the first practical step towards a solution, said the paper. We need to see concrete progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track because this would open the way for concrete progress on the other tracks and a comprehensive settlement at the end, said the paper. But the paper warned that Israel should not display their good intentions by words, but rather through practice at the Washington talks with the different Arab parties so that an opportune climate could be created for an aspired peace settlement, said the paper. It said that the Arab parties would like to see the Israelis not only willing, but also taking steps to pull out their forces from occupied Arab land as their share in the peace deal with the Arab states and in implementation of the U.N. resolutions which call for the exchange of land for peace.

J. FANEK, a columnist in Al Rai Arabic daily criticised Washington for exercising enormous pressure on the Jordanian government to sign a peace treaty with Israel without waiting for the other Arab parties and without securing anything for us in exchange for all that, said the writer. Washington wants the Jordanians to tighten the sanctions on Iraq and end the sanctions on Israel, else the siege on Aqaba will continue, no financial aid would come and the Jordanians would find it difficult to get aid from other countries, charged Faneke. These pressures, he said, have been exercised on Jordan through the various U.S. delegations and recently by the U.S. commerce secretary and the U.S. Congress members.

Creating jobs first in occupied Palestinian lands

By Dr. James Zoghy

M. KAHIL



Builders for Peace (BFP), the American project launched by Vice President Al Gore to promote private investment in the West Bank and Gaza, has recently completed a week-long visit to the Middle East. The visit included stops in Tunisia, Jordan, the West Bank and Israel and was led by BFP's co-presidents, former U.S. Congressman Mel Levine and myself. While the major focus of the trip was designed to bring potential U.S. investors to meet with and develop ties with Palestinian partners, the BFP delegation also conducted briefing sessions with important regional political and business leaders and jointly sponsored a U.S.-Palestinian business roundtable discussion in Bethlehem with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown.

During its week-long stay in the region, the BFP leadership met with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia, leaders of the Tunisian, Jordanian and Israeli business communities, Israeli Minister of Industry and Trade Micah Harish, Palestinian officials in the West Bank and Gaza and Palestinian business leaders from the occupied territories.

While our visit was met with widespread enthusiasm for investment and economic growth in the Palestinian lands, we also discovered real frustration with the slow pace of the peace process and fear that further stalemate would erode the support for the process that was generated by the Sept. 13th events and concern, especially among political leaders, that without real progress towards implementation of the accords, foreign economic involvement in the Palestinian territories will be stalled.

In Tunisia, we found the foreign minister to be fully supportive of bringing new private investment to the West Bank and Gaza. He was not only enthusiastic about the BFP programme, but was also eager to see the Tunisian business community participate in the Palestinian ventures.

The Tunisian business leadership has already begun to explore business contacts in the occupied territories, and in a week's time will be sending a delegation to the West Bank and Gaza to gain first-hand experience regarding the opportunities available to them, both in direct Tunisian-Palestinian joint ventures and also in Tunisian-Palestinian-Israeli economic projects.

In Tunisia, the BFP leadership met with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. While Mr. Arafat expressed his strong endorsement of BFP and praised the initiative launched by Vice President Al Gore, he also expressed the widespread Palestinian concern that without real progress on the political front, the entire peace process could unravel. Recognising that genuine progress required movement on the economic front, he nevertheless focused his attention on the political problems currently being negotiated with the Israelis.

In an effort to make clear his strong support for BFP, Chairman Arafat delivered to the co-presidents an endorsement which read, in part:

"...I commend the tireless efforts made by both of you personally in directing Builders

for Peace so as to realise the objectives you set for strengthening bilateral relationships among us and for deepening economic and investment cooperation in the Palestinian Territories, especially so that you were successful in attracting a number of U.S. businessmen and investors to have interest in the Palestinian economy. "I wish your... success... will contribute to furthering our efforts and those of our Palestinian people to establish economic and organic structures and institutions on the road to establishing dynamic, vital and creative economy which will open up wide horizons for the creative capabilities of our people, and which will strengthen the confidence of friendly investors from other countries in the Palestinian economy."

"Therefore, I appeal to all investors from the U.S.A. and the other friendly countries to invest in Palestine to revive the nascent Palestinian economy, because that will have a great influence on solidifying the basis of a just peace."

The Jordanian business leadership was as eager as any group to begin investment in the West Bank and Gaza, but was a bit more jaded. The general consensus of the Jordanian business leaders with whom we met was that as long as the Declaration of Principles goes unimplemented, and the Israeli administration in the territories and its regulatory regime stayed in control, investment in growing the Palestinian economy was not possible.

The Jordanian business leaders, while eager to renew their economic connection to the West Bank are not enthusiastic about doing so as long as they must deal with an Israeli occupation administration. Our discussions with them included reports of their frustrations with their separation from the West Bank and their past dealings with Israeli authorities. They reported confiscations of family-owned land, long waits for or denials of building permits, denials of licences and the absence of banking institutions (due to

Israeli closure of Jordanian banks in the territories) as reasons for their concern.

Nevertheless, in part because of their personal connections to the West Bank, and because these businessmen sense real investment possibilities, they were eager to work with BFP to form joint partnerships to promote growth and regional economic cooperation.

These sober yet hopeful assessments did not prepare us for the attitudes we discovered among the Palestinian business leaders we met in our three days of meetings in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. These meetings were the centrepiece of our visit and brought together our BFP leadership and a delegation of 20 American businessmen and over 100 Palestinians from a variety of economic sectors in the West Bank and Gaza. The meetings were organised by sector, including separate roundtable discussions representing the following groups:

— Leather and footwear, garments, handicrafts, tourism, manufacturing and pharmaceuticals.

What was most striking about these meetings was the difference between the attitudes these Palestinians had towards economic prospects and those shared by their political leadership both inside and outside the territories. They came ready to do business and saw no reason to delay in developing joint ventures. They understood that the need to make progress on the political front and they realised all the hardships imposed upon economic activity by the Israeli regulatory regime — but these businessmen and women had worked with this regime in the past and succeeded despite it.

Despite the burdens and inequities of Israeli policy, despite the absence of capital and access to markets, the Palestinian business community creatively adapted itself to its harsh environment, employs thousands, produces a wide variety of goods and services and became economically viable. They urged the U.S.

businessmen to invest now so as to bring the fruits of peace quickly to the territories and assist them in achieving economic independence and building their own economic infrastructure.

Even before BFP left Jerusalem, U.S. investors had begun to develop partnerships with Palestinian businessmen. And in the week since the completion of the mission, major agreements are being worked out in textiles, bottling beverages, pharmaceuticals and handicrafts.

U.S. commitment to BFP and to American investment in the West Bank and Gaza remains high. One of the final events of the BFP visit to the West Bank and Gaza was a business roundtable in Bethlehem. The event was co-sponsored by BFP and U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown — a clear indication of the Clinton administration's support for promoting economic relations between Palestinian and U.S. business communities. Speaking to the 20 American and 30 Palestinian leaders assembled at the roundtable, Secretary Brown praised the Palestinian private sector. Reporting on what he had seen in his short stay in the region, he noted:

"The talent, energy and vision is there — if we remove the obstacles, it will flourish."

And speaking on his return to the U.S., just two days later at the Arab American Institute's conference in Washington, Secretary Brown elaborated on his views that the Palestinian business community needed to be supported immediately. He said:

"...as secretary of commerce, my principal focus is how we can create economic opportunity, how can we create economic growth, how can we create jobs so that people can take care of the basic needs of their families, and that is particularly the case in the West Bank and Gaza."

"I know we talk about the peace process on this track, and economic opportunity on another track. I think they are inextricably tied together."

"As the prospects for peace become more apparent, the expectations of people are raised. We have to do everything we can to meet those expectations. They are only going to be met through economic development, they are only going to be met through jobs; they are only going to be met through economic opportunity; and I think we have to find a way to get the political discussion and the economic discussion moving at the same time. And that is why I spent a good deal of time trying to convince American businessmen and women to that they ought to be investing and forming commercial and economic relationships, not only throughout the region, but in particular in those areas of the region that need the most help, specifically the West Bank and Gaza. And believe it or not, there is some response."

And later, in the same speech, the secretary said: "I think there are people who want to see change, who understand that occupation of the territories is unacceptable, who understand that the disparity in the lives of human beings is unacceptable, who understand that people of goodwill have to step in and try to make a difference."

"One of the things that concerned me was that too often the business leaders were way ahead of the political leaders. The business leaders seemed to understand what this was all about: this is about changing lives. The political leaders were saying, 'No, we have to do every i and cross every t before we can get on with economic development.'"

"I think that's nonsense. I think there is no time to waste. I think we have to start dealing with these real issues while we seek a final peace settlement. I don't think you can ask people to keep suffering while too much posturing and focus on symbolism goes on and not enough focus is on what is happening to human lives. And I'm encouraged that there is a growing consensus, and that is why Builders for Peace is having such growing success."

Clinton foreign policy success fading away

By Laurence McQuillan
Reuter

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton's foreign travels, designed to make his mark on the world stage, thus far resemble a walk on the beach — with the deep impressions left on the diplomatic sands quickly being washed away.

Second-guessing, both within the United States and abroad, has been on the rise as a growing chorus of critics question what has become of the once-vaunted U.S. leadership role around the world.

Former President George Bush ended his year-long silence on his successor to question Mr. Clinton's "episodic attention" to foreign policy, followed by a tendency to relegate it to "a back burner."

Mr. Clinton has made two major foreign trips during his presidency — to Asia in July and Europe earlier this month. Both have fallen short of the results claimed at the time.

During his first major overseas venture, Mr. Clinton signed what was hailed as a dramatic breakthrough in trade relations between Tokyo and Washington. It would slash the trade imbalance between the two nations, both sides agreed.

Next month, when Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa comes to Washington for talks with Mr. Clinton, representatives of both men will hold negotiations over what the two nations agreed to back in Tokyo.

The U.S. side thought they agreed to use specific numbers to measure the progress in lowering the trade advantage Japan enjoys. The Japanese, however, saw nothing in the accord that tied them to that approach.

During Mr. Clinton's stop in Moscow this month, he met with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and proclaimed his confidence that reforms would be not be slowed by the unexpectedly strong showing by ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in parliamentary elections.

If the weeks since the Clinton visit, reform architect Yegor Gaidar resigned claiming the government was abandoning monetary controls and Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov left warning of a red economic coup, hyperinflation and an approaching "social explosion."

A team of International Monetary Fund experts leaves Tuesday for Moscow on a mission designed to reach agreement on a new economic reform plan and a \$1.5 billion loan.

IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus offered a gloomy assessment of the mission's chances, saying: "I cannot guarantee that we will end up successfully, but at least we will have gone down a bit of the same road together."

As the aftershocks of the parliamentary elections were still being felt, the Washington Post reported Saturday that the administration "now is gloomily prepared to accept that President Boris Yeltsin probably will not be able to deliver on his strong personal assurances... that economic reforms will remain intact."

During the summer summit of the seven industrialised nations in Tokyo and a gathering of NATO leaders in Brussels this month, the allies threatened to use air strikes to end the three-way civil war among Muslims, Serbs and Croats.

The United States, however, is refusing to go along with tougher action in dealing with the fighting, prompting a frustrated French official to say: "We are on two different wavelengths."

Former Defence Secretary Dick Cheney says he is starting to worry about "the fact that... the conduct of U.S. foreign policy over the last few months has sometimes failed to instill respect in our adversaries and inspire confidence in our allies."

It is "dangerous if there's a lack of consistency and focus in U.S. policy," he said in an interview on public television's McNeil/Lehrer News Hour.

The last man to occupy the oval office, himself criticised for spending too much time with foreign affairs, says Mr. Clinton may have gone too far the other way.

"President Clinton made it obvious he wants to concentrate on domestic policy and put foreign policy on a back burner," he found out that isn't possible," Mr. Bush said in an interview in the February issue of Washingtonian Magazine.

More war and famine predicted for southern Sudan

By Rosalind Mandine Murphy

WASHINGTON — Humanitarian relief workers in southern Sudan are predicting a massive and bloody offensive against rebel factions in the south by Sudanese government forces and increased famine conditions throughout the country in 1994. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officials reported Jan. 27.

This year "will be... bloodier than usual and more famine-prone than usual," Mr. Douglas Stafford, assistant administrator for Humanitarian Response for USAID, said during a press briefing at the State Department.

The end result will be a continuing emergency relief situation in Sudan and an increase in the already swelling population of Sudanese refugees in neighbouring states. Mr. Stafford warned. Security problems, difficulties in dealing with the Sudanese government in Khartoum, and shrinking donor funds for relief assistance, will exacerbate an already difficult situation, he added.

Mr. Stafford stressed that there is an urgent need for increased world-wide food assistance to Sudan for 1994. "There is enough food to probably last through April that has been pledged at this point," he said.

The World Food Programme, he said, "is... sounding the alarm at this point that in their pipeline they do not have a full 1994 pledge to meet the needs of Sudan." In response to this situation, Mr. Stafford said, international relief agencies and organisation will issue an appeal for an additional \$279 million for food relief.

The conflict in Sudan between the central government in the north and the separatist Sudan's People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the South has been ongoing for the better part of three decades. After a short period of peace, the civil war resumed in 1983. The political conflict has increasingly been seen in religious and ethnic terms, since the North is Arabic-speaking and Muslim and the South is largely animist and Christian. Casualties have

proven high. Mr. Stafford said some reports put the number of those killed in the civil war — either by famine or military action — at one million. The United Nations estimates that 2.5 million people in Sudan are now in need of some form of emergency relief assistance. Of that number, 1.5 million people live in the south.

There are an estimated 391,000 Sudanese refugees in the Central African Republic, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zaire, and Kenya, according to USAID. There are 400,000 displaced Sudanese living in the greater Khartoum area, and over 600,000 displaced southerners living in a transition zone in the states of Darfur, southern Kordofan, northern Bahr Al Ghazal, and northern Upper Nile.

Relief workers in the south report "seeing a definite increase in the activity of northern military that are gathering in that area and getting ready for the annual campaign," Mr. Stafford said.

Relief workers are "projecting that the north is better armed, (and) has more soldiers that are going to be ready for the dry season offensive," he

said. The dry season has already begun in Sudan, he noted.

"These relief workers are also predicting that major settlements (in the south) will be the target of the north..." he said.

"This time, instead of withdrawing after the rainy season begins back to the north, they may in fact occupy the towns," Mr. Stafford said. Atrocities reportedly committed by government forces against the population of the south will drive inhabitants from the area, Mr. Stafford said. (Human rights violations by SPLA forces have also been reported.)

Predicting "a massive evacuation of cities and towns," Mr. Stafford said that the fleeing southerners would either join the rebels "in the bush... or will go across the border as refugees."

Security problems, such as mining of roads, aerial bombings, and attacks on relief workers, continue to plague humanitarian relief efforts, added Lois Richards, deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau of Humanitarian Response at USAID.

Both the Sudanese govern-

ment and the rebel factions often obstruct relief efforts. Mr. Richards pointed out. Such obstructions include delaying or refusing permission for trucks, barges and trains of relief assistance to get through.

Nor can Sudan's own agriculture be expected to meet the food shortfall. Relief workers are reporting a 36 per cent drop in the sorghum crop in Sudan, Mr. Stafford said. "We are not going to have only an unhappy situation in the south, but the north itself is going to be facing some pretty severe food shortages," he warned.

In terms of international relief assistance to Sudan, Mr. Stafford said the United States is "by far the largest donor" with a projected aid package this year of close to \$90 million, 60 per cent of which will be allocated to the World Food Programme.

Other major donors to Sudan include the European Community, Germany and Japan, Mr. Stafford noted. In 1993, the international community donated over \$219 million in humanitarian aid to Sudan, according to a recent USAID release — United States Information Agency.

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Arafat ready to sign accord

(Continued from page 1)

PLO told military radio that the Palestinians had accepted most of the Jewish state's security demands.

They agreed that the autonomous Jericho region would be 54 square kilometres, around a fifth of what they wanted, and had agreed that Israel would control crossing points.

Meanwhile, a PLO official in Cairo said the organisation is awaiting word from the Israelis to hold more talks this week on finalising the accord.

Israeli army radio said the working group is to meet Wednesday or Thursday in Cairo.

In his address to the U.N. commission, which began its annual six-week session on Monday, Mr. Arafat appealed for pressure on Israel over human rights to be maintained.

The commission has passed resolutions condemning Israeli practices in the territories every year since Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in 1967, but U.S. officials

have said they will push this year for a "more balanced" resolution recognising the moves towards peace.

Mr. Arafat told the commission that Palestinians were still having their basic human rights abused in the occupied territories where, he said, torture, killings and arbitrary arrests continued.

The PLO leader said Palestinian youths were still being persecuted on the streets and more than 14,000 Palestinians were detained in Israeli prisons and camps.

"I have spoken to you and I have told you how much our Palestinian people are suffering under the Israeli occupation," Mr. Arafat said, referring to two previous visits to the commission.

"They are still suffering from violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms which have come to encompass all rights without exception, starting with the violation of the right to life and ending with the violation of the right to freedom of expression, freedom of opinion."

Ekeus offers no clue to sanctions

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Ekeus is expected in Baghdad on Wednesday for talks on setting up a system of long-term monitoring of Iraq's weapons programmes.

On any recommendation to lift the blockade, Mr. Ekeus referred Tuesday to the wider "political ambience," explaining that it would be hard to convince the Security Council to lift sanctions on Iraq if Baghdad were grossly violating other terms of the Gulf war ceasefire.

Most of Iraq's arms, including nuclear, long-range missile, chemical and biological weapons programmes, were destroyed either by allied

bombs during the Gulf war or under the supervision of U.N. inspectors over the past three years.

A U.N. team of chemical experts arrived in Baghdad Tuesday for a two-week inspection linked to efforts to set up long-term monitoring of Iraq's weapons programmes.

"The aim of our mission is to identify and to tag, that means to seal, special chemical production equipment which was procured by the Iraqi chemical warfare programme in the past," said Horst Reeps, leader of the 11-member team.

Mr. Reeps's recommendations will give Mr. Ekeus a basis for deciding which should be destroyed and which could be returned to the Iraqis.

Shots fired during Tehran speech

(Continued from page 1)

speech: "Our enemies have lost hope in conspiring against us. Their newest trick is to use the morale of the people as a weapon."

The crowd's immediate reaction to the incident was to

denounce the Iraq-based Mujahedeen — invariably blamed in Iran for any political violence.

"Death to the monafeq," they chanted, in reference to the Mujahedeen who are called monafeqeen (hypocrites) in Iran in a play of words on their names.

Village kicks up a stink over rotting fish aroma

By Jill Serjeant
Reuter

GRIMSBY, England — The people of Grimsby are kicking up a stink over the smells that have put their town, one of Europe's biggest fishing ports, on the tourist map.

The pong of rotting fish that has for decades greeted visitors to the bracing North Sea town is destined to join the below-decks aroma of sweaty socks and diesel fuel now found only in the Fishing Heritage Museum.

Environmental health officials have ordered Grimsby's fish offal factory, which turns leftovers into animal feed, to clean up its act in line with new air pollution laws.

But the fishy whiff is precisely the smell that the local tourist board has been using, with typically wry northern English humour, to promote the town as a tourist attraction.

"The smells have certainly worked for Grimsby. They have put us back on the map again," said Grimsby Marketing Officer Lynda Scott.

Grimsby's Fishing Heritage Museum plans to bottle the offal odour and preserve it with 23 other sea-faring smells such as "sentiment of seaweed" and "hint of haddock" in the award-winning centre which celebrates the heyday of fishing.

"The smells are an essential part of Grimsby's unique heritage. Soon the only smells you'll be able to smell are those in the museum," said Grimsby Heritage Manager Richard Doughty.

Cod wars, industrialisation and competition from burgers and pizzas to the traditional British snack of fish and chips saw the number of fishermen in Grimsby dwindle from 3,700 in 1955 to fewer than 500 in 1985.

But the lure of the sea is still in the Grimsby blood — as well as in the air.

While the tourist board

sends out "whiff you were here" postcards, the proud but depleted fishing industry is embarking on ambitious plans to secure its future into the 21st century.

Bulldozers move in next month to demolish the dilapidated Victorian market sheds and crumbling quays of the fish docks before a modern landing and distribution centre is built at the mouth of the River Humber.

Trawlermen, fish merchants and Grimsby council are working together on the £13.5 million (£20 million) regeneration scheme aimed at regaining the town's position as a leading international fishing port.

"It is very exciting for the future of the industry. If nothing is done, Grimsby would die as a fishing port," said Derek Young, finance director of the Fish Dock Enterprises Consortium.

Grimsby already has some 84,950 cubic metres of cold storage facilities, making it one of the largest food centres in the world.

More than 7,000 jobs, or 10 per cent of Grimsby's work force, are directly dependent on the fishing and fish processing industry and the consortium hopes the modernised docks will attract more boats from Iceland, Norway and Russia.

Mr. Young said the project, backed by a £5.43 million (£8.1 million) grant from the European Union, was the only major development in Britain's shrinking fishing industry.

The redevelopment means visitors will still be able to follow their noses to Grimsby and hear the cries of seagulls swooping over catches of fresh herring, mackerel and cod.

Families living near the malodorous fish offal factory on the outskirts of Grimsby, however, have welcomed the imminent disappearance of the worst aroma in town.

Ban on their best weapon leaves locust fighters hopping mad

By Nick Louth
Reuter

AMSTERDAM — To ancient eyes the sight of a swarm of locusts was a terrifying message from God, a harbinger of doom and famine.

For thousands of years swarms of the voracious insects have swept out of the deserts bordering the Red Sea and gorged themselves on the crops of Africa, Arabia and Central Asia. Having turned the landscape into bare earth, they disappear.

"For they covered the face of the whole earth so that the land was darkened and they did eat every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees and there remained not one green thing throughout all the land of Egypt," says the Bible's Book of Exodus.

Even to scientists in the late 20th century, the approach of a cloud of billions of locusts is awe-inspiring.

"If you get a swarm end-on it can look like a sort of storm cloud coming up on you at a very low altitude, that is when it is at its most dramatic," said Phil Symmons, the world's most experienced locust fighter.

After an unusually short four-year gap locust swarms are beginning to gather again, with reports of upsurges in India, Pakistan, Morocco and parts of southern Africa.

Locust fighters are banned from using their best weapon, a pesticide called dieldrin which can stop swarms forming.

"It is pretty worrying," said entomologist Arnold van Huis of Wageningen University in the eastern Netherlands.

Locust experts from all over the world met at the university in December to rethink their strategies.

Locust plagues have diminished in scale and frequency in the past three decades. But scientists are now coming round to the view that it is because of the prevalence of unusually dry weather rather than anything they have done.

The worst prospect is that the current swarms, aided by sufficiently wet weather, could turn into a Biblical-style plague of a kind last seen in the late 1960s.

The size and power of the biggest locust swarms are almost unimaginable and their food consumption unmatched in nature.

The biggest single swarm covered an area of 1,000 square km — enough to cover greater London — and comprised 50 billion insects.

With each locust able to consume its own weight (about two grammes or less than one-tenth of an ounce) daily the swarm consumed 100,000 tonnes of vegetation a day.

When conditions are right and food plentiful, locusts breed with astonishing rapidity, swamping all predators.

When there is too little food they eat each other.

The swarms are highly mobile. They can devastate one area then fly hundreds of kilometres in a few days to another.

"It has a grasp on the popular imagination which means politically it is a high-profile problem," said Mr. Symmons, a consultant to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation.

While the cash value of lost crops may not always be high, for subsistence communities inhabiting marginal land the losses can be devastating.

Dieldrin had been used since the 1950s and was applied by truck or aircraft in thin widely-spaced strips across huge areas of semi-desert vegetation, usually at the stage in swarm

development before the locusts had taken to the air.

Because dieldrin accumulates in the body only very low doses were needed and the voracious creatures would slowly be poisoned.

It is precisely because dieldrin is long-lasting and accumulates in body cells that it was banned in the late 1980s. The fear, rejected by locust fighters, was that it would accumulate in the food chain, finally reaching man.

In the last upsurge of locusts

between 1987 and 1989 — the first for which dieldrin could not be used — 300 million was spent on a control campaign. More than 15 million litres of pesticide were used.

Now that dieldrin is banned, less effective insecticides, which can be broken down by the locust, have to be used. This means high doses to kill them immediately.

This approach is more costly and, scientists say, more damaging to the ecosystem than dieldrin. It is also harder to organise in Third World

countries with few resources. "Without dieldrin you have to wait until there are big swarms. They have to be monitored, and the risks of missing them are much higher," Mr. Van Huis said.

Other possible weapons are being investigated.

Britain's International Institute of Biological Control, near Ascot west of London, is experimenting with a fungus which penetrates the locust's body shell and slowly kills it

from the inside, but is harmless to other insects and animals. Help may come from other sources.

In November 1988 billions of locusts flew from North Africa into the Atlantic, driven out to sea by a huge tropical storm. Most died, but some reached Central and South America 5,000 km away.

"It is almost incredible. They must have been over the sea for a week. They shouldn't have enough body fat for this," Mr. Van Huis said.



When food is little, locusts eat each other (File photo)

Historian finds 'exuberant pessimism' rampant in Germany

By Tom Heneghan
Reuter

BONN — Historian Fritz Stern has the knack of finding the right phrase to describe the prevailing mood in Germany. His latest is "exuberant pessimism."

One of the leading American experts on Germany, Mr. Stern has spent almost four months observing his favourite subject matter from the unusual post of adviser to the U.S. embassy in Bonn.

He found a Germany deep in self-doubt, filled with worries that have come through in his own recent writing about the setbacks the country has faced since uniting in 1990.

But Mr. Stern, 67, has also seen enough of the changes underway to go back to his professor's chair at Columbia University in New York with a noticeably more positive outlook.

"I had been so troubled by the Germans' exuberant pessimism that I felt one had to remember that things basically were very good," he told Reuters before leaving Bonn last weekend.

"I (now) tend to stress, my God, what achievements we've made since 1989, even if things have not all worked out as they should have," he said.

The problems spawning such pessimism — mounting unemployment, disillusion in the ex-communist east, neo-Nazi violence — have dominated the headlines since the divided nation hastily reunited three years ago.

To understand the longer-term trends behind the news, Richard Holbrook, an Asian specialist unexpectedly named as the new U.S. ambassador to Bonn, brought his longtime friend, Mr. Stern, along for a unique stint as "visiting historian."

"The past is more present in this country than in any other country save possibly Russia, but even there I'm not sure," Mr. Stern explains. "The historian can be useful."

It would be hard to find a more qualified adviser. Mr. Stern was born into a Jewish family in Breslau, now Wroclaw in Poland, and emigrated to the United States in 1938 at the age of 12.

His writings have won him such respect in Germany that, in 1987, he became the only foreigner ever to address the Bonn parliament at the special annual sitting to commemorate the 1953 workers' uprising in East Germany.

During his short stay in Bonn, he was invited to give a dozen lectures at universities around the country and flooded with far more interview requests than he could meet.

Mr. Stern, whose tweed jackets, sparkling eyes and shock of white hair make him stand out among the dark-suited diplomats, says his stay helped him update his views on what he calls "Germany's second chance."

The fact that unification came as the world slid into recession has made the merger far more difficult than anyone foresaw when the Berlin wall was opened in 1989, he says.

Many Germans have reacted by falling into a "weepee mood" that overlooks the great strides the country is making.

"It is disappointing that there is as much misunderstanding as there is at the same time as there is a great deal of constructive material and psychological support for the new laender (eastern states)," he said.

"Taxi-drivers tell you they would wish one could rebuild the wall, only higher," he said, citing yet another example of what he, quoting Freud, likes to call "the narcissism of small differences" between the East and the West.

The problems are real, he hastens to add, but so are the unreamed-of opportunities Germany now has.

"When I see a state like Saxony (in east Germany), I see a region that may well become one of the most modern regions of all Europe."

Mr. Stern takes a similarly positive approach towards Germany's future political role, an issue the country has been debating for three years now while its edgy neighbours wait for clear signs on which way it will go.

"One would wish they have fewer difficulties in defining their national interest and ceasing to worry so much about their national identity, but one has to respect where that comes from," he argued.

"What one really ought to say is perhaps, if so many of you feel the country is not normal, then start behaving like a normal country."

Reminded of the criticism Bonn reaped when it first attempted a "normal" foreign policy — its lonely drive to recognise Croatia and Slovenia in 1991 — Mr. Stern added: "Try to behave like a normal country with exceptional tact..."

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's efforts to have German troops join their allies in new peacekeeping missions in the post-cold war world have been another start-and-go struggle.

Many opposition Social Democrats, traditionally suspicious of the armed forces, argue that Germany's past aggression should bar it from military action beyond its borders.

"I would imagine that simply

the sense of historic responsibility in a country that has become so large and so powerful will prevail," Mr. Stern observed.

"I assume that sooner rather than later, the Germans would understand that for peacekeep-

London's FTSE index pierces 3,500 mark

LONDON (P) — British shares strode to a high of 3,500 mark on the key 100-share index for the first time Tuesday, and traders and analysts said the bull run was set to continue.

The rise in the London market followed further sharp gains on Wall Street overnight and in the Far East early Tuesday. Continental European bourses also mainly remained firm.

The Financial Times-Stock Exchange (FTSE) index of 100 leading British shares opened 19.6 points higher at 3,511.4, beating its previous intraday high of 3,496.1 on Jan. 1. It hit a closing high of 3,491.8 on Monday.

The FTSE, which later eased back below 3,500 in late morning on profit-taking, was again helped by sharp gains in British Aerospace as the market reacted with enthusiasm to the sale of its Rover car-making unit to BMW.

Alison Southey, strategist with brokerage Nomura International, who are leading bulls of the London market, said the FTSE index could rise to 3,700 "imminently."

She said the market was firmly based on expected strong economic growth in Britain and rising company earnings this year, combined with a background of interest rates that are relatively low and likely to remain so, and subdued

inflation.

Richard Kersley of BZW said sentiment was still very positive, with trading volumes high, but said he would like to see gains in government bonds and a significant upturn in corporate earnings to support market fundamentals.

The annual reporting season for major British companies is just about to start, with names such as British Telecom, British Petroleum and Reuters Holdings PLC due to report next week.

Traders said some correction was possible after the run-up, which has seen FTSE rise 400 points since October.

But one senior trader said London looked set to remain

firm as international investors, such as Japanese and U.S. institutions, saw it as a "safe haven" compared with faltering emerging markets or with continental Europe, where expectations of economic growth are lower.

"The message is 'don't be short,'" said another senior trader, who said the market would not look overvalued if the quality of company earnings comes through as expected.

European bourses were also mostly firm Tuesday, although there were signs of profit-taking emerging.

In Germany, where BMW held the sharp gains made Monday on news of its purch-

ase of Rover, the DAX index was up 11.18, or 0.51 per cent, to 2,188.63 in late morning.

But the Paris Bourse retreated from a firmer start, with the CAC 40 down 2.56 points to 2,331.8.

Sentiment overall in equity markets was helped by Wall Street's 33-point rise to 3,978 on the Dow Jones index, another record, despite warnings by Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan that a long-expected rise in short-term U.S. interest rates could now be on the way.

But traders here said any rise in short-term U.S. rates would come from a position of strength in the U.S. economy.

Fiat crashes to heavy loss in '93

TURIN, Italy (R) — Carmaker Fiat SPA, Italy's largest private firm, announced Monday it lost 1.8 trillion lire (\$1.05 billion) last year due to the crisis in the European car market.

It was the company's first loss for more than a decade and reflected the slump in European car sales which fell around 15 per cent last year. Fiat made a 551 billion lire (\$324 million) profit in 1992.

The car company said the loss reflected the dramatic situation facing the European car industry.

Algeria says IMF wants devaluation of dinar by 30-50%

ALGIERS (R) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) wants Algeria to devalue the dinar by 30 to 50 per cent but this is more than the country can bear, Algerian state radio said Tuesday.

"The IMF is seeking a 30 to 50 per cent devaluation of the dinar, a wider opening of the Algerian market and an end to subsidies to its money-losing state firms," the radio said.

"The Malek government is conscious that the application of these measures would be too much for the population to bear," it added.

Algeria's new president Liamine Zerrouk, sworn in on Monday, has retained Redha Malek as prime minister.

An Algerian team is due to visit Washington shortly for a new round of talks with the IMF, state news agency APS reported last Monday.

Economy Minister Mourad Benachennou said in a newspaper interview last week he hoped to sign a letter of intent with the IMF for a standby loan by the end of the February.

Lebanese parliament passes 1994 budget

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's parliament passed into law Monday a 4,690 billion Lebanese lira (\$2.75 billion) budget for 1994 despite criticisms of government economic and financial policies during a five-day budget debate.

Some of the 127 deputies accused Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri during the weekend debate of behaving like a sultan and unleashing savage capitalism on Lebanon.

The 1994 budget was nearly 24 per cent over the 1993 budget of 3,800 billion liras.

Details of proposed expenditures and revenues were not immediately available but minister of state for finance Fuad Siniora has forecast a 42 per cent deficit. The 1993 deficit forecast was 50 per cent but increased revenue collection and control of expenditure last year reduced it to 42 per cent.

Mr. Siniora told parliament the government's policies were aimed at restoring confidence, reducing inflation, stabilising

the pound the ending dollarisation of the economy.

It aimed at steadily reducing the budget deficit by increasing revenues, Mr. Siniora added. Fiscal reforms were aimed at reducing taxes, spreading the tax burden more evenly and encouraging foreign and domestic investment in Lebanon.

Parliament amended the budget draft after criticisms by deputies, increasing health ministry funds and reducing the state television. Officials said the changes were minor and would not hamper government reconstruction plans.

They said Lebanon had more pressing needs such as housing and financing the return home of tens of thousands of people displaced by the 1975-90 civil war.

Deputies also criticised the government for seeking foreign finance for reconstruction. The government said foreign debt was around \$350 million but some deputies said it was over \$650 million.

Australian GDP outlook brightens

CANBERRA (R) — The Australian government Tuesday issued a batch of fresh economic forecasts showing the country is coming out of its prolonged recession with strong growth and low inflation.

Treasurer Ralph Willis, forecasting economic growth of 3.5 per cent in the year to June 30, told parliament Australia now had its best economic fundamentals in 30 years.

"That rate of growth is of course virtually in excess of every country in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)," Mr. Willis said.

"In short we are magnificently positioned for a sustained period of strong economic growth, major employment growth and reductions in unemployment and rising living standards," said Mr. Willis, who forecast a 4.0 per cent growth in 1994/95.

The government originally forecast 2.75 per cent growth for the year when it released its

budget in August.

Mr. Willis said inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, would be only 2.0 per cent in 1993/94, below the 3.5 per cent rate forecast.

"We are seeing a faster rate of recovery without the signs of emerging inflationary and current-account constraints which have too often characterised stronger periods of economic growth in previous economic upturns," the treasurer said.

"We have the best conjuncture of economic fundamentals for 30 years," he pointed out.

This had been achieved while the international economy remained weak, depressing the prices of Australia's commodity exports, he said.

Australian GDP growth would accelerate to 4.0 per cent in 1994/95 as the world picked up pace, he said. The Australian economy grew 2.7 per cent in 1992/93. Mr. Willis said employment would grow 1.75 per cent in 1993/94.

Turkish central bank head quits

ANKARA (R) — Turkish central bank governor Bulent Gultekin resigned Monday after a crisis that forced him to devalue the lira, saying he could no longer work with the prime minister and that confidence was fading in the country.

He was the second governor of the central bank to quit within less than six months.

Mr. Gultekin said his departure, which came after markets in Istanbul closed Monday, would not lead to a new crisis. But bankers said it could aggravate the market turmoil.

The central bank and the treasury crossed swords after his resignation, blaming each other over last week's 11.97 per cent devaluation of the lira.

Mr. Gultekin, who took up his post five months ago, said he could not work with prime minister Tansu Ciller.

"Under these circumstances, I do not believe any longer that I can work in harmony with the prime minister and that I can be of service to Turkey and the central bank," he said. His predecessor Rusdu Saracoglu also quit over a policy dispute with Ms. Ciller, who failed in her attempts to push interest rates down last year.

"I feel that the atmosphere of confidence is fading in Turkey," Mr. Gultekin said. A medium-term economic programme was lacking, he added.

"Political resolution is needed," he said, defending his record as governor during 10 days of market turmoil.

"I am quitting as a captain who has guided his ship to calm waters. The markets have been brought fully under control," Mr. Gultekin told a news conference.

But overnight interest rates hit 500 per cent on the inter-bank market as banks struggled to find liquidity after the devaluation and other central bank measures to defend the lira. Rates later eased to 100 per cent.

The lira ended at 17,150 to the dollar, up 450 lira from the opening, as cash-strapped banks hunted for lira.

Bankers said the resignation could erode Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) ahead

of major local elections in March.

Mesut Yilmaz, leader of the main opposition Motherland Party (ANAP), intensified his attacks on Ms. Ciller.

"Turkey is faced with a serious finance problem. The reason of this crisis is the fact that Turkey has the worst economic management in its history," Mr. Yilmaz told reporters.

"The prime minister is now stunned... Gultekin's resignation was a late but correct decision. He did what he should have done," Mr. Yilmaz said. "It proves Ciller cannot manage Turkey."

Bankers said his resignation could not have come at a worse time for Turkey, which is waging a costly battle against a 10-year-old Kurdish insurgency in the south-east.

Officials say Turkey, struggling with an annual inflation

of 71.1 per cent, is likely to spend \$8 billion this year to crush the Kurdistan Workers Party.

Turkey is already struggling with huge public and external deficits and its credit rating was recently downgraded by two major rating institutions — Moody's and Standard Poor's.

"Gultekin's resignation was a serious blow for Ms. Ciller's popularity. It will weaken her chances in the elections," Tayyar Ozerdem, general manager of Nurel Securities, commented.

ANAP is likely to press ahead for an early general election, not normally due until 1996, if it defeats the DYP in March.

There was no official statement on who would replace Mr. Gultekin. Bankers expect deputy governor Kadir Gunay to be named as acting head.

BMW takeover of Rover creates new force in car market

LONDON (R) — German luxury car-maker BMW Monday announced the purchase of Rover from British Aerospace (BAE), ending nearly a century-old tradition of independent mass car production in Britain.

The move doubles BMW's market share in Europe to 6.4 per cent, making it the seventh largest European car-maker with a higher turnover than arch-rival Mercedes, analysts said.

"The product ranges of the two companies complement each other almost ideally," BMW chief financial officer Volker Doppeldecker told reporters in Munich.

BMW, famous for stylish cars aimed at up-and-coming executives, has gained the prestigious four wheel drive Land Rover marque as well as a way into the small-car market.

It will also have access to low-cost plants developed with Japanese technology at Longbridge and Cowley in central England which build Rover's Mini executive car, launched last year to rival BMW's own 3-series and enter the Germany market.

Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW) A.G. is to pay £800 million (\$1.2 billion) in cash for Britain's biggest carmaker but also take over various Rover debts and liabilities amounting to another £900 million (\$1.35 billion).

The deal upset Rover's Japanese partner Honda, which said it would keep its 20 per cent share of the British firm.

The decision of BAE to sell its Rover shares to BMW negates Honda and Rover's long-term efforts to establish a firm future for Rover as a British

company with its own brand identity." Honda President Nobuhiko Kawamoto said in a statement.

But Mr. Doppeldecker said Rover would continue to operate as a separate company, its marque would be retained and BMW hoped its management would stay on.

While management jobs appeared safe, British union officials feared the takeover could mean big job losses for workers.

"Here we have two companies both producing half a million cars a year, each selling into the same market," said Jack Adams of the Transport Workers' Union.

But BMW promised the takeover would create rather than destroy British jobs. "Long-term jobs will not just be secured, but expanded,"

said BMW's Doppeldecker.

Ford, Nissan and many other foreign companies are still making cars in Britain but Rover's sale leaves only small specialist producers, notably Rolls-Royce, in British hands.

With Rover, BMW has acquired a proud history of British car engineering going back to the 1910s. But it has also inherited a legacy of industrial strife which peaked in the 1970s and crippled the company.

Rover's history goes back to 1915 when Lord Austin founded the Austin Motor Company at Longbridge.

In 1952, Austin and Morris, Britain's two most modern and highly-productive car companies, merged to become the British Motor Corporation making more than 280,000 vehicles annually.

Seven years later it unveiled the world-famous design classic, the Mini, which is still in demand today.

In 1968 a merger created British Leyland, a vast firm with 70 factories and some 200,000 workers which suffered severe industrial militancy, strikes and inefficiency. By the mid-1970s it had to be saved from bankruptcy by the government.

In the 1980s, tough businessmen were called in by the government to get the firm into shape. The name was changed to B.L., then Austin Rover, then just Rover, as buses, trucks and parts divisions were sold off and the workforce slashed.

The government sold Rover in 1988 for just £150 million (\$225 million) to British Aerospace.

Sharing Honda's dismay, many Britons were saddened to see the company sold just as it was emerging from decades of trouble to become a success story.

Rover is the only car-maker to report an operating profit for 1993 during one of the deepest crises in the industry. Pre-tax profit was estimated at £56 million (\$84 million) on sales of £4.3 billion (\$6.5 billion).

But George Simpson, Rover chairman and British Aerospace (BAE) board member, insisted the BMW deal was the best alternative.

"Honda's interest was never in acquiring 100 per cent of Rover, they wanted to increase their equity stake. For BAE, our aim was a 100 per cent exit so we sold to BMW and not to Honda," he told Reuters.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 2, 1994
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Flight Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You have ingenuity in your favour to deal with some obstacles that will require patience this morning as the Moon squares Mars and the Sun squares Jupiter indicating a tendency toward extravagance.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) By getting in touch with expert advisors, you are now able to get the advice and answers you have been seeking with regard to business or personal matters.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Contact individuals whose experience is different or more extensive than yours so you learn much that is worthwhile and of a lofty nature for use in the future in order to become more successful in your career.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A fine day to decide on policy matters with associates so that there is a maximum of cooperation all around. Take time to come to an understanding with competition or those who do not agree with you.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) By getting an early start you can put all those accumulated tasks behind you very quickly and efficiently today.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) The ideal day and night to start working on projects of great size and scope. Contact the right people and start the ball rolling efficiently.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Family is expecting much

from you now, though little is said, so be very sure do your utmost to bring greater harmony and security into the important sphere of your life.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is ideal day to get in touch with those whose action are puzzling and from whom you want straight-from-the-shoulder answers.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) "Think big and get big" should be your motto today, not only in business but personal, artistic, creative matters as well for your success.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A day to think pretty much in terms of self and your most cherished ambitions. If it is not necessary to go out, by all means stay at home.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Since you keep yourself so busy with practical and material affairs, you hardly take the time for emotional or creative things of life.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 19) Seek out plain-speaking, honest individuals today if you want to know the truth about yourself, get fine ideas for advancement, know how to increase circle of worthwhile friends.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The ideal day to get the support you need for important projects from influential friends. Later, become interested in the problems and needs of the public.

THE Daily Crossword by Roger Jurgovan

ACROSS

- 1 Toodle-oo
- 2 Vastness
- 3 Resumes
- 4 Numbers people
- 5 Roman poet
- 6 Asian capital
- 7 Joint sealer
- 8 Place for storage
- 9 Space
- 10 Twelve months: abbrev.
- 11 Raise — (make trouble)
- 12 Felts
- 13 Despot
- 14 Peruvian beast
- 15 Period of prosperity
- 16 Labor
- 17 Asian festival
- 18 Spoon
- 19 Place for dining
- 20 — vera
- 21 Out of — (it)
- 22 Ireland
- 23 Place of jurisdiction
- 24 Recover
- 25 — in (surround)
- 26 Responsibility
- 27 Cruces
- 28 Sacred images
- 29 Loving touch
- 30 Leftist
- 31 Astronaut
- 32 Soviet aircraft
- 33 Cupid
- 34 Place for discovery
- 35 Dreadful
- 36 Overweight
- 37 Scandalous news bit
- 38 "who?"
- 39 Chewable nut
- 40 Loach
- 41 Whig's opponent
- 42 Turn aside
- 43 Intoxicated
- 44 Habbub
- 45 Indians, e.g.
- 46 — four (cats)
- 47 Shortly
- 48 Continent: abbrev.
- 49 Fox
- 50 Asphyx
- 51 Place of excretion
- 52 Suit to —
- 53 Clue
- 54 Land or sea and
- 55 Soapstone
- 56 Sovereign
- 57 Subline
- 58 Pervocations
- 59 Tossing
- 60 Buffalo's lake
- 61 Across Daily
- 62 Wood strip
- 63 Term at sea
- 64 School residence
- 65 Haley opus
- 66 Vex
- 67 Astorish
- 68 Address one
- 69 Italian city
- 70 Begets
- 71 Some agents
- 72 Solo
- 73 Checks out
- 74 Nearby
- 75 Snuck
- 76 Begot
- 77 Yess
- 78 honest
- 79 Metal

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

DOWN

- 1 Whig's opponent
- 2 Turn aside
- 3 Intoxicated
- 4 Habbub
- 5 Indians, e.g.
- 6 — four (cats)
- 7 Shortly
- 8 Continent: abbrev.
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- 33 Checks out
- 34 Nearby
- 35 Snuck
- 36 Begot
- 37 Yess
- 38 honest
- 39 Metal

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"I called a psychic today. She doesn't know where your socks disappear to either!"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argentin

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PIPNY

KEDAB

GOIMES

EUMMUS

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THEIR "O O O O O O O O O O"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FIFTY CREEL BAFFLE MUFFLE

Answer: What did the tourists get in Paris? — AN EIFFEL EYEFUL

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

Izetbegovic wants 'fair peace'

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnia's Muslim President, Alija Izetbegovic, said Tuesday he was not prepared to accept peace to end the 22-month-old war in his country unless it was fair.

As he spoke, Serb gunners were reported to have stepped up their shelling of Sarajevo and there were further clashes between Muslims and Croats in the southern city of Mostar.

A U.N. military spokesman said one person was killed and eight were wounded in government-held areas of Sarajevo, including a child hit by a sniper, while two people were wounded on the Serb side of the lines.

In Mostar, local radios reported a total of 13 people wounded on both sides of the Muslim-Croat front line in the city.

Russian ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, continuing a visit to Yugoslavia where he has issued a series of extreme statements, arrived in Montenegro and did not disappoint his audience.

"World history cannot do without wars," he told officials. "But let's conduct the kind of policy that will shift these little wars far from the Slav world and into Africa, Latin America or India."

In Sarajevo, Mr. Izetbegovic

said after talks with Yasushi Akashi, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's special envoy to former Yugoslavia, that the Bosnian government would not sign any agreement at negotiations scheduled for Feb. 10 in Geneva later this month if it was not offered a fair peace.

In a brief statement to reporters, the Bosnian leader said: "I told (Akashi) that we are not for peace under any kind of conditions. We are for a fair peace."

"That fair peace has not been offered to us. If no one offers us one, we will not sign any document. Not now, on the 10th of February this year and not on the 10th of February next year."

Peace mediator Lord Owen, co-chairman of the Geneva talks with Norway's Thorvald Stoltenberg, has said the negotiations are virtually stalled.

The Muslims have been encouraged by battlefield successes against the Bosnian Croats and hope that the increasing pressure of economic sanctions on Belgrade will force Serbs to agree to the territorial concessions that Mr. Izetbegovic has demanded.

But Bosnia's Serbs have issued a general mobilisation

order, prompting fears that they are ready for a major push in the fighting.

The United Nations has estimated that up to 5,000 regular Croatian army troops have crossed into Bosnia to help the Croats there, setting the stage for more fighting with the Muslims.

Croatia has so far only admitted to the presence of about 1,500 Croatian volunteers in Bosnia.

The U.N. military spokesman in Sarajevo, Colonel Bill Aikman, said an aid convoy of the private Save the Children Fund was looted by knife-wielding villagers Monday.

The trucks, travelling in Muslim-controlled territory, were ambushed when forced to stop by boulders on the road.

"Out of the woods came a group of civilian men with knives. They slashed open the canvas sides of the vehicles and started offloading them," Col. Aikman said.

"The convoy made its way out after a few minutes but lost 20 per cent of their supplies."

The convoy did not have a U.N. military escort. Many non-U.N. aid convoys do not want armed protection because they consider it inappropriate to their humanita-

rian mission.

But after Monday's incident, Col. Aikman said British peacekeeping units in the region would refuse passage until further notice for any aid convoys lacking escorts.

Croat and Muslim forces duelled with small arms and heavy machine guns in the Vitez area of central Bosnia Monday.

U.N. observers spotted helicopter activity by both sides in violation of the U.N. "no-fly" decree monitored by NATO jets.

A transport helicopter belonging to the Muslim-led Bosnian army was seen loading up and taking off near Novi Travnik while a Croat helicopter was observed hovering over a Vitez quarry used as a base to resupply Croat ground troops, Col. Aikman said.

Trucks carrying the world's largest mobile hospital began arriving in the Muslim sector of Mostar after being halted and checked twice by Bosnian Croats, U.N. officials said.

The first 19 containers of the massive field hospital, donated to the Bosnian government by a South African charity, passed the last Croat checkpoint south of Mostar. The remaining 19 containers are expected to be brought in Wednesday.



Divas weep as Barcelona opera burns

BARCELONA, Spain (R) — Montserrat Caballe and Victoria de Los Angeles were among thousands who mourned after fire gutted Barcelona's famous Liceo Opera House. Flames engulfing the 19th century Liceo, Spain's leading opera house and one of the world's largest, sent a dense pall of smoke over Ramblas Avenue in the heart of the city. Tearful opera singers joined thousands of Catalans on the tree-lined Ramblas as flames poured out of the Liceo, which opened its doors in 1847. Montserrat Caballe, herself a Catalan, wept as she saw the ruins. "For me it is a truly dreadful misfortune," said the soprano, who cancelled a trip to London on learning the news. Victoria de Los Angeles, who made her soprano debut in the Liceo 50 years ago, was inconsolable. "I have no more tears left. I am profoundly sad. This is a great loss because for

Punjab police ordered to remove women's tattoos

CHANDIGARH, India (AFP) — An Indian court has ordered the police department of northern Punjab state to surgically remove tattoos put on the faces of four women as a punishment for stealing. High Court Judges A.P. Chowdhury and G.C. Garg told the police to pay for plastic surgery needed to remove the word "pickpocket" branded on the foreheads of the four women and directed that the treatment must begin Thursday. They told the police to escort the four branded women to a government-run hospital in the city of Patiala for the plastic surgery. Five policemen were suspended earlier this month for tattooing the women in the holy Sikh city of Amritsar after arresting them on charges of robbing a foreign tourist. The word "pickpocket" in Punjabi language was branded across the foreheads of the four women while they were in police custody. The incident prompted protests by human rights and women's groups across the troubled state.

Glyndebourne Opera House reborn

GLYNDEBOURNE, England (AP) — The first new opera house to be built in Britain for 60 years will open at Glyndebourne in southern England this spring on schedule and on budget, Chairman Sir George Christie said Monday. The new theatre, a privately funded venture costing £33 million (\$49.5 million), replaces the original built in 1934 by Sir George's parents beside their Tudor country house in the Sussex Hills, 50 miles (80 km) south of London. The opera closed in July 1992 for the rebuilding and the original opera house has been demolished. Glyndebourne's three-month summer season, founded by rich landowners John Christie to show off the talents of his young soprano wife, Audrey Mildmay, quickly became famous as something to see and be seen at. The carefully crafted performances with world-class singing and a curtain-up at 5.30 p.m. attracted international critics and "Rolls-Royce" led evening-dress audiences to picnic with chicken, lobster and champagne on the lawns in the evening sun.

Rabbi charged with drug trafficking

MONTREAL (AP) — A rabbi and his assistant have been charged with drug trafficking, denied bail and ordered held until a hearing Friday. Meyer Krentzman, 49, of the Beth Zion Congregation, and Andor Galandauer, 45, a synagogue assistant, each face seven counts of trafficking in cocaine and heroin. The men were arrested in mid-January along with a third man, Wiesnashan Thamocharmpillai, who faces four counts of trafficking. Krentzman and Galandauer are charged with selling one kilogramme of cocaine on Dec. 6 and 30 grammes of heroin on Jan. 19 to undercover police officers. Krentzman, Galandauer and Thamocharmpillai also are charged with selling one gramme of cocaine on Nov. 17, plotting to commit a criminal act between Nov. 17 and Jan. 19, and possessing 81 grammes of heroin on Jan. 19 for trafficking purposes. The arrest rocked the synagogue's suburban Cote-St-Luc community because Krentzman has held positions as an employee of major Jewish organisations.

Mexican tourists bilked out of \$500,000

ATLANTA (R) — More than 600 Mexican tourists will probably never forget Super Bowl XXVIII. But they won't have fond memories, when they look back on the day the Buffalo Bills suffered a fourth-straight NFL championship loss. The fans travelled thousands of miles to see the big showdown Sunday between Buffalo and the Dallas Cowboys only to find out the Texas ticket broker who sold them over \$500,000 worth of tickets had absconded with the money. "I feel kind of disappointed. But anyway, what can we do?" one Mexican tourist told local television as the group prepared to fly back from Atlanta Monday. Another said the group has hired U.S. and Mexican lawyers to investigate. An official from the Mexican agency that initially placed the order was quoted as saying the FBI also will be called in.

ANC meets on latest political deadlock

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Leaders of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) gathered for a special meeting in Johannesburg Tuesday to assess the latest deadlock in constitutional talks with black and white conservatives.

Talks between the government, the ANC and the right-wing Freedom Alliance of black and white conservatives stalled Tuesday.

The ANC and the Freedom Alliance cannot find each other's chief government negotiator Roelf Meyer told reporters.

"Unless they... change their positions in the next 48 hours, there's not going to be much progress on the way forward," he said.

ANC Chairman Thabo Mbeki

said he would take right-wing proposals for constitutional amendments to the 26-member National Working Committee (NWC) Tuesday.

"The discussion is going on. We are still intent on finding a solution," he told reporters.

But Communist Party veteran Joe Slovo said there was little hope of a settlement that would persuade right-wingers to abandon their boycott of the country's first all-race election in April.

Asked if there was still light at the end of the tunnel, he said: "That would be an exaggerated statement."

Right-wing leader General Constand Viljoen, whose African People's Front (APF) is a key member of the Freedom Alliance, said later that if Africans did not get a homeland

soon he doubted the April elections would be possible.

"Violence is already very high and if we don't get a Volkstaat (homeland) it will go through the ceiling," he said in a television interview.

More than 4,000 people died in political violence last year and political leaders have warned it could surge unless right-wingers were brought on board the transition to majority rule after more than three centuries of white domination.

ANC spokesman Carl Niehaus condemned Gen. Viljoen's comments Tuesday and said the ANC, which is widely expected to dominate the election results, did not fear outright civil war.

"The majority of South Africans, even APF supporters, want to avoid that at all costs,"

British troops attacked in Ulster

BELFAST (Agencies) — British troops came under mortar fire and a policeman was injured by an explosion in Northern Ireland early Tuesday as Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams began a controversial visit to America.

Police said several mortar rounds were fired on troops at a checkpoint southwest of here at Newry, County Down, near the Irish border, but no casualties were immediately reported.

The attack, on the main highway between Belfast and Dublin, followed an explosion earlier in the day that injured a policeman responding to a call at a Catholic home in the predominantly Protestant town of Portadown.

A police spokesman said the officer, answering a call that a brick had been thrown through the living room window, was opening the garden gate when he apparently triggered a device intended for the Catholic family that lived in the house.

The officer was treated at a hospital for shrapnel wounds to the legs and released.

There were no immediate claims for either incident.

The attacks occurred as Mr. Adams, president of the Irish Republican Army's political wing, was attending a Northern Ireland conference in New York on a controversial last-minute visa agreed by Washington over London's protests.

The granting of the visa has been vehemently condemned by Ulster Unionists.

The IRA's political chief, vowing he wants to "take the gun out of Irish politics," broke a major barrier Monday when he arrived in the United States to bring his case to the American people for the first time.

Mr. Adams immediately launched into a series of TV appearances designed to win U.S. support and a public platform — something he was denied until recently in Ireland and is still forbidden in Britain where his "talking head" is banned on radio and television.

Within hours of arriving, he appeared on CNN's Larry King Show, the programme that regularly attracts presidents and prime ministers, offering to buy the host a pint of Guinness on Belfast's Falls Road. King told his audience that the show would not be broadcast on the cable network's European service because of the British ban on Mr. Adams.

But the King programme was not all sweetness and light as many of his celebrity interviews are. Mr. King pressed him on whether he was on the outlawed Irish Republican Army's Command Council, approved military targets and attended the funerals of IRA bombmakers.

He denied all the charges, save going to funerals and said, "I want to see the gun taken out of Irish politics and this Sinn Fein leadership will be the one which takes it out."

He also denied that Sinn Fein and the IRA were one

Mexico awaits rebel response for talks

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Mexico's government waited Monday for a rebel response to an offer of talks: with the delay dealing a blow to the image of a modern Mexico that President Carlos Salinas has worked hard to sell.

In late 1993, Mexico saw its trade pact with the United States and Canada, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), approved amid hopes that trade would mean more wealth in a country with an average income of \$2,317 in 1992.

But then indigenous Maya rebels launched a New Year's Day rebellion, facing expulsion from traditional lands by new landowners, and seeking government guarantees that NAFTA would not leave them still further behind in the overwhelmingly rural state of Chiapas, Mexico's poorest.

The rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army took its name from Emiliano Zapata, a sad-eyed farmer who became a civil war general and land reform advocate before he was slain in 1919.

The government acknowledged 100 deaths in the Chiapas uprising before the fighting stopped and has not updated the toll. Roman Catholic authorities put the number killed at about 400.

The government put something of a velvet glove over its iron fist, decreeing an amnesty and unilateral ceasefire after clamping down on the fighting.

The ball is now in the rebels' court. They must decide if they will accept the government's agenda: Negotiations, preliminary agreements, fulfillment of preliminary agreements, formal end to hostilities, disarmament, reconciliation, and integration of the Zapatistas into political groups.

The uprising came as an embarrassment to Mr. Salinas, a Harvard-educated technocrat who had tried to cut inflation, curb government spending and turn Mexico into an economically developed country.

But the real political victim could be Luis Donaldo Colosio, the man Mr. Salinas chose to run as the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party's candidate in August's presidential vote.

Before being tapped to run for president, Mr. Colosio had been social development minister.

The political tempest in Chiapas has helped Mr. Colosio's political rival, Manuel Camacho, formerly a popular Mexico City mayor.

Hosokawa bounces back to sky-high rating

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa bounced back to lofty ratings in two newspaper polls published Tuesday, erasing a month-long slump as he struggled with political reform and put off economic moves.

Surveys in the Asahi Shimbun and Mainichi Shimbun, taken immediately after parliament Saturday approved the politically contentious reform bills, gave Mr. Hosokawa identical 74 per cent support ratings.

In December, the parliamentary deadlock over reform and Mr. Hosokawa's unwillingness to give priority to economic measures pushed his popularity in a Mainichi poll down to 58 per cent — well below his 75 per cent rating when he took office in August.

The Asahi survey said a majority of Japanese felt the two main established parties — the Socialists and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) — should split.

The LDP was seriously divided between young reformists and old hardliners, forcing party head Yohei Kono to forge a deal with Mr. Hosokawa over the reform bills last week.

If the LDP had kept its unity

during the last acts of the parliamentary battle, Mr. Kono could have refused a deal and toppled Mr. Hosokawa and his fragile coalition.

The Socialists, the biggest but most unreliable partner in Mr. Hosokawa's alliance, were even deeper in trouble. A rebellion by 20 Socialist upper house members — 17 voted against the reform bills and three abstained — almost killed the bills.

In the end, the rebels, who wanted stricter anti-graft measures, forced Mr. Hosokawa to give in to LDP demands to ease measures already in place.

will be likely to be moving into an unsafe area of drinking," Dr. Harper said, adding that he believed a very significant number of Australians were doing so.

His research also shows even moderate drinking shrinks the many fine protrusions (or dendrites) which brain cells put out to send messages to each other.

A drinker's IQ could remain the same, but damage to the front of the brain makes learning new tasks difficult, reduces problem-solving ability and interferes with decision-making, he said.

Dr. Harper said eating plenty of Vitamin B1 Thiamin was an important way to minimise alcohol-related damage, which disrupts the body's ability to absorb, store and use the vitamin.

"To compensate for the loss of Thiamin, an adequate diet is essential, even for those who are just 'social drinkers,'" he said.

Australia's decision to add the vitamin to flour and bread hopefully would reduce the incidence of a severe alcohol-caused memory loss known as Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome, which occurs more commonly in Australia than anywhere else.

Even 'modest' tipplers risk brain damage — study

SYDNEY (AFP) — People who consider themselves moderate drinkers may be shrinking their brains, damaging mental functions such as problem solving and memory, an Australian study has found.

While heavy drinking has long been associated with brain damage, a study of the brains of dead Australians has shown even people who thought of themselves as social tipplers are placing themselves at risk, Sydney University neuro-pathologist Clive Harper said Tuesday.

"Many people who consider themselves 'social drinkers' have been shown to have brain shrinkage and subtle deficits in various brain functions, such as abstract thinking, problem-solving and memory," said Dr. Harper.

"These deficits can clearly have a profound impact on day-to-day living and work performance."

Dr. Harper, the university's professor of neuropathology, heads a team which recently won a big U.S. grant to under-

take research into alcohol-related brain damage.

Among other things, he wants to try to establish why the incidence of alcohol-related brain damage is higher in Australia than almost anywhere else although alcohol consumption is not correspondingly high.

The brains of 60 dead Australian residents, including non-drinkers and moderate drinkers are being studied.

By examining the brains of dead people and investigating their drinking history, Dr. Harper's team has found brain shrinkage in people who habitually drank only five to eight standard drinks a day.

A standard drink is defined as a bottle of beer, a nip of spirits or a glass of wine.

"Two to five drinks is safe, but if you go for more than that you're likely to be moving into an unsafe area of drinking," Dr. Harper said, adding that he believed a very significant number of Australians were doing so.

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moderate drinking shrinks the many fine protrusions (or dendrites) which brain cells put out to send messages to each other.

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Kohl: Bonn reached limit of aid to Russia

WASHINGTON (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Monday building democracy in Russia and Eastern Europe is the "major future task" facing the West but said Germany had given its full share of aid to Russia.

"We have come to the limit of what we can shoulder as a burden," Mr. Kohl, speaking through an interpreter, told a news conference.

He noted that Germany, for historical and a security reasons, had been by far the single biggest donor to Moscow to help reforms, but it was now up to other countries, especially the Europeans, to increase their contribution.

In a speech earlier to a meeting of U.S. governors, he said he and President Bill Clinton, who met for lunch, had agreed that "we must now combine our efforts in order to support Russia's progress and that of all the other reforming states towards stable democracy."

He said: "The long-term safeguarding of freedom, democracy and the free market in the formerly Communist part of Europe is a gigantic task. It is the major future task for you, for us and for our partners."

He urged America to main-

tain its world leadership role. "The world continues to pin its hopes and expectations upon you," he said.

At his news conference, Mr. Kohl, on a two-day visit to Washington, reaffirmed his country's cautious approach to outside military intervention in the Bosnian conflict, a policy echoed by Mr. Clinton.

Sending in outside ground forces would create "an incredible bloodbath," he said.

He said the priority was "first and foremost to maintain humanitarian assistance to the suffering people" in Bosnia. He and Mr. Clinton had agreed on the need to avoid action that would put the Bosnian Muslims under further pressure.

He said all sides were aware that the violence in the war-ravaged country did not originate with the Muslims and should realise the Islamic World is watching the savagery in Bosnia with mounting concern.

Mr. Kohl declined the role of mediator the United States and France, which has accused Washington of inaction over Bosnia. "The people we are talking about are all grown-ups, they do not need interpreters," he said.

Mr. Kohl said he could not confirm reports that Croatia was sending military units into Bosnia to back up Bosnian Croat forces, but said he would strongly disapprove. "I would find a way of putting my disapproval into practice," he added.

The two leaders, who met at an Italian restaurant, reviewed developments in Moscow since the Jan. 10-11 NATO Brussels summit, in particular the retreat of reformers in Russia's new government.

Mr. Clinton's initial favouring of the Pacific rim as an essential area for U.S. foreign and trade policy when he took power last year aroused concern that Washington could be losing interest in Europe.

The president's trip to both West and East Europe earlier this month and his repeated commitment to helping reform in Russia have eased many worries, but European policymakers are still stressing how important they feel continued links are.

Mr. Kohl and Mr. Clinton, known for their hearty appetites, met for lunch at Filomena's Italian restaurant, known for its big servings, in the capital's trendy Georgetown quarter.

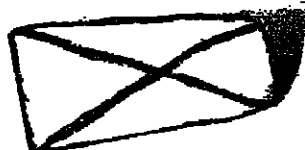
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Maier death casts shadow over Lillehammer preparations

LILLEHAMMER (AFP) — The death of Uli Maier in a World Cup race has highlighted the hidden dangers of Alpine skiing and cast a shadow over preparations for the Lillehammer Olympics in two weeks.

The 26-year-old Austrian was the first woman killed in top level skiing — which has claimed the lives of nine top men racers since 1959.

Her death from terrible internal injuries in the 100 kph fall changed expectations for Lillehammer from just a changing of the guard in the glamour sport.

Maier was one of several skiers — such as Marc Girardelli, Alberto Tomba, Guenther Mader, Vreni Schneider, Anita Wachter and Carole Merle — expected to challenge for honours in their final Olympics.

But the Maier tragedy at Garmisch Partenkirchen has forced a change of thought for many teams. The Austrian women's team were devastated by the loss of the former world giant slalom champion.

They will miss the final women's World Cup weekend at Sierra Nevada in Spain and will have a special training programme laid on for the Olympics.

Other teams were also stunned by the death. "Whenever anything like this happens you always think twice, before setting off down a hill," said French teenager Melanie Suchet who followed Maier on the Garmisch Partenkirchen slope and finished second.

The emergence of new stars will now be imperative to ease the sadness at Lillehammer.

And the host country look set to lead the new generation of young stars. Everything points to 22-year-old Norwegian allrounder Kjetil Andre Aamodt cleaning up in a brace of events.

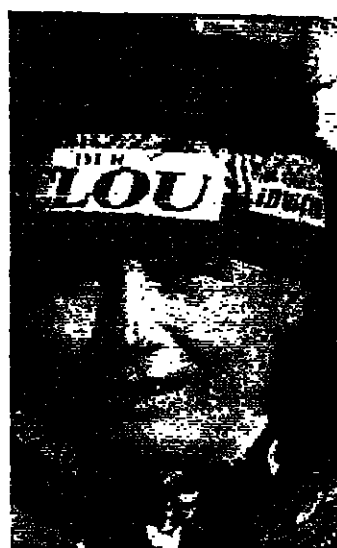
He will be supported by downhiller Atle Skjardal and technical skiers Ole-Christen Furuseth and Finn-Christen Jagge who could also win medals.

Norway's chance of a women's medal was dashed in December when Astrid Loevdem fell during a World Cup super-G Austria and tore the right knee ligaments.

Canada seems set to re-establish its downhill tradition in the women's race. The Slovenes, whose best skiers have always been technical, are producing new stars like 21-year-old Jure Kosir.

Austria and Norway should dominate the skiing. Austria because skiing — despite the weekend death — is a national industry and Norway because they have wisely invested in their team to come good for the games.

Austria's Patrick Ortlieb is leading downhill contender, Mader in the middle disciplines and Thomas Stangassinger in the slalom. Wachter will now backbone the women's team.



Uli Maier

in the absence of Maier — with support from downhiller Anja Hass and possible surprises from the new star Renate Goetsch.

Italy can expect medal performances from Tomba and women's champion Deborah Compagnoni. Germany's hopes rest with the dashing Katja Seizinger, at 22, going to her second Olympics with confident medal expectations.

Downhill always hogs the headlines because it is the fastest event.

But the giant slalom — run over two legs through at least 30 gates set over a 35-metre-wide course — also promises plenty of thrills.

A man's giant slalom has a vertical drop of between 300-400 metres. A woman's event between 300 and 350 metres.

Prime medal candidates for the men's event are Tomba and Aamodt, hotly pursued by Girardelli, a five time World Cup winner for Luxembourg, Mader and French veteran and super-G Olympian Franck Piccard.

The women's event is wide open. Maier was a leading contender with Wachter, who will now meet her biggest challenge in Compagnoni, Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden and Seizinger.

The super giant slalom, introduced in the early 1980s to test downhillers and technical skiers alike, is essentially a stretched giant slalom run over one leg.

A men's super-G course has a vertical drop of 500 to 600 metres with a minimum of 35 gates. The women's course drops 400 to 500 metres with a minimum of 30 gates.

Though it is a speed event, favouring downhillers, the super-G has hastened the tendency towards technical skiers.

The men's gold should be a competition between Mader, Aamodt and Girardelli, if the five time World Cup winner peaks in February.

Seizinger will be hard to beat for the women's gold. Wachter must also be watched with, if she hits form, Carole Merle of France a former dominant force in super-G.

Federation rejects blame for Maier's death

VIENNA (R) — The International Ski Federation (FIS) has rejected charges by the finance of Uli Maier that its officials were to blame for the accident which killed the Austrian skier in a World Cup downhill race Saturday.

FIS Director Gianfranco Kasper, appearing in an Austrian Television panel discussion Monday evening, said organisers did "everything humanly possible to ensure safety" on the Kandahar Piste at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Bavaria.

"We have a clear conscience," he said. "There is no patent formula for ruling out every kind of risk."

"I don't wish to sound callous but, as they say, the show must go on," he added.

German police are conducting an investigation, a routine procedure in cases of fatal accident.

Hubert Schweighofer, the bereaved fiancé and father of Maier's four-year-old daughter, appeared later on Austrian television and said: "The FIS is fully responsible."

Schweighofer, flanked by his lawyer, repeated his charge that Maier would have suffered no more than a bad fall, instead of a fatal broken neck, had her head not struck a wooden post driven into the piste.

He said the post, set up to hold a timing device, should never have been on the piste, especially at its narrowest point, and the protection around it was wholly inadequate.

He added bitterly that neither he nor the Maier family had received a single telephone call from "overpaid" FIS officials who were hundreds of miles away in Spain, preparing for next weekend's races, when they ought to have been ensuring safety at Garmisch.

And he vowed to sue the sport's controlling body for what he alleged was its careless approach to safety standards.

Maier said before starting that the piste was "brutally icy" and almost too dangerous to race.

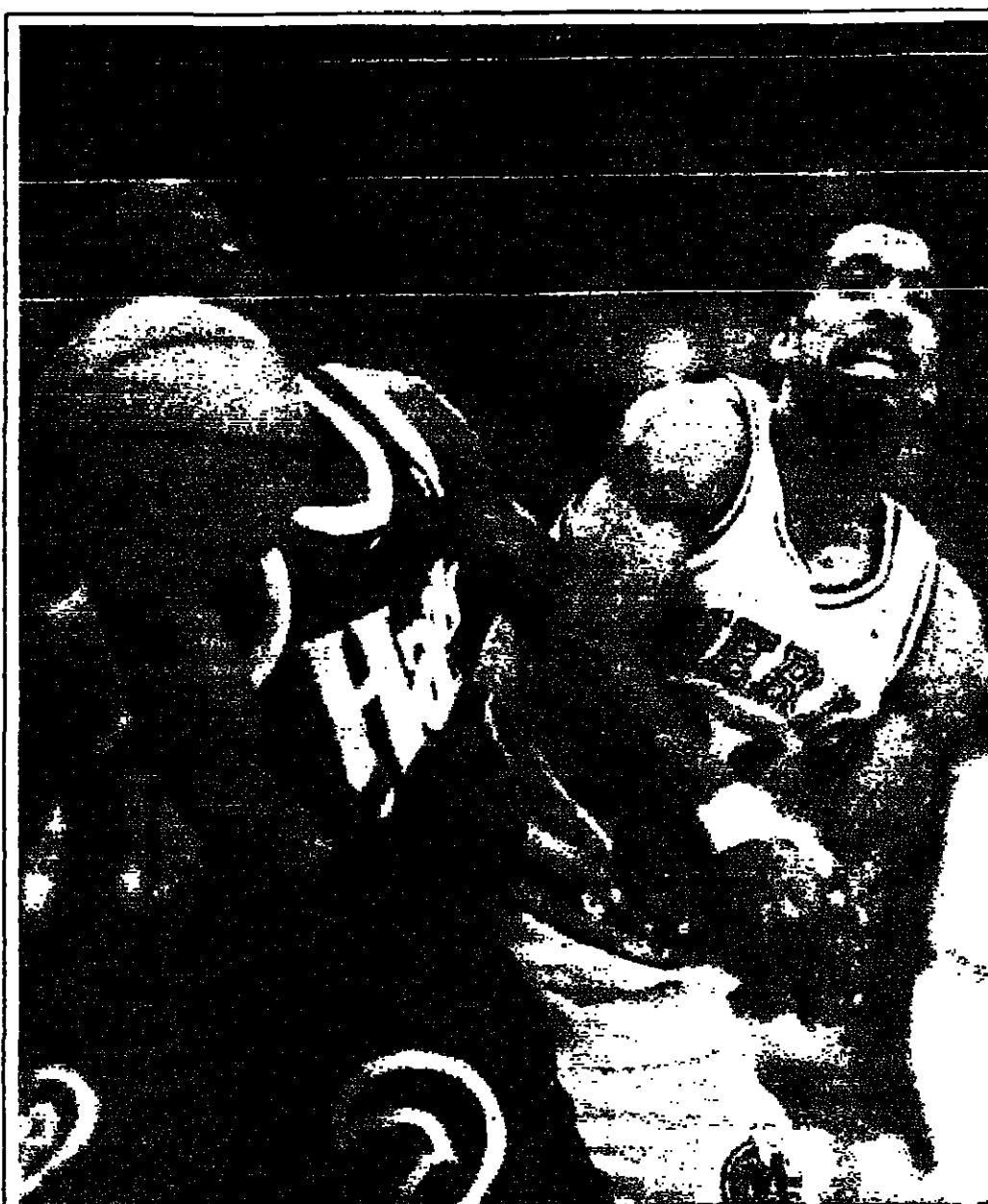
After her horrific crash, the event continued, although the German doctor who attended her after she was taken by helicopter to an emergency clinic said: "She died immediately."

Schweighofer's lawyer, Harald Letterer, said there had clearly been a "crash error" up Garmisch officials in allowing the timing device to be placed where it was.

He said a race technical director who maintained there had always been such an installation at that point in the Kandahar run was provided wrong by simply viewing film of past races which showed no timing device near the post.

He added that race organisers had failed to take the precaution of sawing halfway through the wooden post at ground level, so that it would snap off harmlessly if a skier crashed into it.

Schweighofer said his legal action for negligence would be based on the precedent set by Canadian downhiller Brian Stemmler who sued organisers following a crash at Kitzbuehel five years ago and won his case.



Mookie Blaylock of the Atlanta Hawks (left) and Fat Lever of the Dallas Mavericks chase a loose ball during early action in their Monday game. Atlanta beat Dallas 90-84. In other National Basketball Association (NBA) matches played Monday, the Cleveland Cavaliers beat Detroit Pistons 107-103 and the Golden State Warriors overcame the Los Angeles Clippers 110-96 (AFP)

Graf, Navratilova advance in Toray Pan Pacific Open

TOKYO (R) — World number one Steffi Graf and defending champion Martina Navratilova wasted little time or energy Tuesday in sweeping aside first-round opponents in the Toray Pan Pacific Open women's tennis tournament in Tokyo.

Top-seeded Graf, fresh from her crushing straight-sets victory in the Australian Open Saturday, took up where she left off in Melbourne.

Adapting easily to the fast-carpet surface of the Tokyo metropolitan gymnasium, the German player blitzed Croatian Iva Majoli 6-1 6-0 in only 43 minutes.

World number three Navratilova, making her first appearance in a tournament this year, is seeking her 16th title in her final year as a singles player.

The Czech-born American, now 37, disposed of Japan's Mana Endo 6-1 6-3 in just under an hour.

Graf, who lost to Navratilova in last year's semi-final, was very pleased with her performance.

"I've only had one day to adjust to this very fast surface so I'm actually surprised I played that well," said a relaxed Graf.

The 24-year-old was merciless from the start, breaking her young opponent in the opening game and then taking her own first service game to love.

Graf, winner here in 1986 and 1990, served and returned so flawlessly throughout the match that the 16-year-old

from Zagreb points only when the German made the odd unforced error.

"I think it's very hard to beat her at this moment," said the up-and-coming Majoli, ranked 50th in the world. "She played so well. She didn't give me any chance as she was always attacking the ball."

Defying the years, Navratilova powered her way through the first set, her strong serve-and-volley game pushing the 22-year-old Endo around the court.

Navratilova, playing her first match since losing to Mary Pierce in the second round of the New York Virginia Slims in mid-November, said she was satisfied but not thrilled with her performance.

Asked how many tournaments she would like to win in her farewell year, a smiling Navratilova said: "I'm playing in 13, so I'd like to win 14."

Third seed Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina made heavy weather of brushing aside tennis qualifier Kyoko Nagatsuka of Japan 6-4 6-4 to set up a second round match against German Marketa Kochta who beat Australian Nicole Provis in the first round.

But Sabatini, a three-times winner who has failed to win a tournament since the Italian Open in May 1992, said she was pleased with her form.

"The first round is the toughest because it's a very different surface. But I'm feeling aggressive and am looking forward to the rest of the tournament."

Record ten cities chase Olympics

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (R) — A record 10 towns and cities are in the race to host the 2002 Winter Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said Tuesday.

As the Feb. 1 deadline for notification of bids passed, the IOC said 10 national Olympic committees had informed them of their intention to submit formal bids.

The cities are the Kazakh capital Alma Ata, Graz in Austria, Jaca in Spain, Salt Lake City in the United States, Ostersund in Sweden, Poprad-Tatry in Slovakia, Sion in Switzerland, Sochi in Russia, Quebec in Canada and Torino in Italy.

IOC officials said the number of bidding cities would be whittled down when the candidate cities present full bids later this year. The 93-member IOC will choose the eventual hosts at a meeting in Budapest in June next year.

In a statement the IOC said: "The record interest for 2002 is further confirmation that the winter Olympics can further increase their appeal when they are the only Olympic games in a year."

This month's Lillehammer Games mark the beginning of a new four-year cycle in which the winter games will be held two years after the summer Olympics instead of the same year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

AC Milan want Gullit back

MILAN, Italy (AFP) — AC Milan want back Ruud Gullit, the Dutch star they got rid of last season. Gullit, with England captain David Platt, has played a key role in Sampdoria's resurgence in the Italian league this year. The Genoa side tail champions Milan who are keeping a close eye on their former player. Gullit, 31, left after finding it impossible to win back a place on returning from a succession of knee injuries. "Ruud is having his best season since arriving in Italy," said Milan President Silvio Berlusconi. "We often speak on the telephone and his return to Milan cannot be ruled out." "This would be a marvellous fairy tale, for him and us. Right now, he has won a great revenge over our doctors who doubted his ability to get back to the top level," Berlusconi added.

5 Indonesian athletes penalised

JAKARTA (AFP) — Five Indonesian athletes have had their medals withdrawn and records annulled for using drugs during national sports week in September, a sports official said here Tuesday. The drugs were detected in urine samples, the chairman of the National Sports Committee (KONI) Suwono told AFP, and contained traces of anabolic steroids. The five athletes — one swimmer and four cyclists — were also moved down a ranking in their related sports. Catherine Surya, a member of the West Java women's swimming team, won seven golds and set five national records. The four cyclists — Muhammad Basti, Ronny Yahya and Dadang Haris in the men's and Alfi Dwiningrum in the women's — had won three golds, two silver and one bronze. Other penalties will be decided by their own sports associations, Suwono said. They could be barred from competition for up to 18 months.

Man terrorised by fans to death

MESSINA, Sicily (AP) — A 22-year-old man jumped to his death from a train while trying to escape a group of soccer fans terrorising passengers, news reports said. Police arrested five people and were looking for accomplices. The fans, returning from a minor league game in Ragusa Sunday, were shoving and punching passengers and trying to take over compartments on the train, according to the Italian news agency ANSA. Salvatore Moschella was kicked and punched after he tried to help a young woman. When he was pursued into another car, he jumped out a window, the report said. His body was found on the tracks hours later.

Zurich to host tennis-style squash

ZURICH (AFP) — Pakistan's Jansher Khan leads an all star cast in a tennis style squash event here in March. World no. 1 Jansher, Australians Brett Martin and Rodney Eyles, and British champion Peter Marshall will try the new format as an experiment when they take part in the Grasshopper Cup from March 24 to 28. Swiss-based Phil Kenyon, of Britain, and South African Craig Wapnick, who won the recent Bern Open, are also in the field. The same scoring system as tennis will be used. For example a match could be played out as 15-0, 30-0, 30-15, 40-15, 40-30, deuce, advantage, game, and a player serves for the whole game.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANMAY HIRSHCH ©1993 Tribune Media Service, Inc.			
APRIL FOOL!			
North-South vulnerable. South deals.		South contributed the king.	
NORTH		SOUTH	
♠ A Q 10 7		♠ 4 3 2	
♥ A Q 4		♥ 7 6 3	
♦ A 4 3		♦ A 9 7 2	
♣ J 10 3		♣ A 2	
WEST		EAST	
♠ 8 5		♠ K 7 6	
♥ K 6 2		♥ A 2 10 8	
♦ 10 9 5		♦ K 9 8	
♣ Q 9 8 5 4		♣ K 7 6	
The bidding:		NT Pass	
NT Pass		NT Pass	
NT Pass		NT Pass	
NT Pass		NT Pass	
Opening lead: Five of ♠		Obviously, had East continued with a club at trick two the contract would have been defeated two tricks—the defenders would have collected four clubs and a trick in each red suit. Although we too might have ended with egg on our face by falling for declarer's ruse, in retrospect East should have returned a club. On this auction West was unlikely to have led a low club from a suit that was not headed by an honor!	

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	PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		CONCORD '1'		Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	
	INDOCHINE		Ahmad Zaki in		FALLING DOWN		A popular political comedy		Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play)	
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 9		The Lady's Chauffeur		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalal, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali		daily at 8:30 p.m.	
	Special show on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. for children Bugs Bunny film.		(Arabic)		Shows: 3:15, 5:15 only		in addition to other comedians		Theatre is closed Mondays and Tuesdays	
					Arabic play "Hi America" at 8:30		Every night at 8:15			
							Tickets are sold all day			

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanese scholar Boustani dead

BEIRUT (AP) — Fouad Efram Boustani, a prominent Lebanese scholar, died in hospital Tuesday, four weeks after suffering a heart attack, his family said. He was 89. Mr. Boustani had been in the intensive care unit at Beirut's Rizk Hospital since he collapsed into coma two weeks ago. A writer, critic, researcher and historian, Mr. Boustani founded the Lebanese University, the country's biggest educational institution, in 1953. He became the publicly funded institution's first president. Born to a Maronite Catholic family in the Shouf mountain town of Deir Al Kamar, Mr. Boustani had a short political career during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war. He was a member of the right-wing Lebanese Front for a few years before it broke up in the late 80s. Mr. Boustani had won awards for his work in education from the Lebanese government, the Vatican, France, Spain, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia and Iran.

Clinton seeks \$1.2b to pay for peacekeeping

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's administration asked Congress Monday for an additional \$1.2 billion for unexpected international peacekeeping costs. The funds are partly needed to pay for U.S. peacekeepers in Somalia until March 31, when the last U.S. troops are due to be withdrawn. The request was expected to win committee support as part of a bill sending relief funds to earthquake victims in California. The United States is participating in several U.N. operations, including relief flights over Bosnia-Herzegovina, a peacekeeping detachment in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia and a fleet in the Adriatic supporting Bosnian operations. However, Senator Bob Dole, a leading critic of the Clinton administration, said \$401 million had already been budgeted this year for peacekeeping. He proposed tougher congressional control over U.S. participation in peacekeeping missions.

Turks visit Iranian victims of air raid

TIFLIS (R) — A Turkish team investigating the reported deaths of Iranian villagers in air raids near the Iran-Iraq border visited victims in hospital on Tuesday and expressed their regret, the Iranian news agency IRNA said. IRNA said the delegation, headed by Ogru Dogan, director general at the Turkish Foreign Ministry, visited a hospital in Iran's northwestern Azerbaijan province. "Talking to the victims the Turkish envoy expressed his government's deep regret over the incident," IRNA said. Turkey on Saturday denied its aircraft had killed Iranian citizens in air raids on rebel Kurds using northern Iraq as a guerrilla base.

Clinton gets 58 per cent approval rating

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Fifty-eight per cent of Americans approve of President Bill Clinton's performance, with most expressing trust and support for his policies, according to a poll published Tuesday. Fifty-three per cent of 1,013 adults polled Jan. 30 by CNN, USA Today and Gallup, approved of his economic policies, a marked improvement over the 46 per cent approval rating he received in a Jan. 17, 1993 survey. Forty-seven per cent gave him high marks for his get-tough approach to crime laid out in his state of the union speech last week, well above the 33 per cent approval rating from a year ago. The president made steady gains in most categories of the polls except in the area of defence, which slipped from 53 per cent to 50 per cent and foreign affairs from 54 per cent to 52 per cent.

Tehran paper says oil officials arrested

TEHRAN (R) — Several senior Iranian Oil Ministry officials have been arrested on alleged bribery charges, the Salam newspaper said Tuesday. It said ministry officials arrested in the oil-producing province of Khuzestan included the deputy chief for operations, the head of drilling and the head of the chemical department on alleged bribery charges and embezzlement of \$30 million. The newspaper did not say when the arrests took place. An Oil Ministry spokesman told Reuters: "We are investigating and at this time we neither approve nor deny the report." Salam quoted what it called an informed Oil Ministry source as saying "the case of embezzlement is true but there is no information on the amount of money involved, number or identity of those arrested."

Saudi royals have 'secret' telephone network

MUNICH (AFP) — Siemens has supplied the royal family of Saudi Arabia with a special digital mobile telephone network, a spokesman for the German firm said Tuesday. The network, currently comprising 10,000 lines, is reserved for use by the family of King Fahd, the spokesman said, confirming a report in the British Financial Times newspaper. The network uses the GSM standard adopted by European countries for the next generation of mobile phones and already in use in France, Scandinavia and Germany. According to the Times, the Saudi royal family ordered the system secretly without approval from the Saudi telecommunications authorities, annexing frequencies earmarked for the country's public telephone service. The Siemens spokesman refused to divulge the price paid for the system. The Times estimated that some \$40 million was paid. Germany's Bild newspaper reported Tuesday the price was 60 million marks (about \$34.5 million). Siemens has already installed GSM systems in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco.

Indians concerned by attacks on Sikhs in Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Three unexplained attacks on Sikhs, including two killings, have worried Kuwait's Indian community, Indian Ambassador Preet Singh said on Tuesday. Mr. Singh said he had conveyed the community's feelings in a meeting with senior Interior Ministry officials and was due to see Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah to discuss the incidents. "We are a little disturbed," Mr. Singh told Reuters. "We are in a confused state. This is in the realm of conjecture, but it may be some fringe group targeting our people. Perhaps it is that Sikhs are easily identified (by their turbans)." On Jan. 23 gunmen shot dead Sikh father-of-two Mannohan Singh Anand, aged about 50 and a Kuwait resident for 30 years. The gunman in a car in the Salmiya area drew up behind at a car carrying him and three other Indians, two of them Sikhs, and sprayed bullets at their vehicle before speeding off. In other incidents cited by the ambassador, on Dec. 31 a Sikh shop was burnt down, causing losses of about one million dinars (\$3.3 million), and on Nov. 3 a Sikh was found dead.

Envoy briefs Kuwait after Iraq trip

KUWAIT (R) — An Arab League envoy who recently visited Iraq to seek information on hundreds of Kuwaitis missing and believed held there said Baghdad had shown readiness to cooperate on the issue, the Kuwait News Agency reported. "He (envoy Mahyoubi Al Mahyoubi) noted that the Iraqi officials have shown readiness to cooperate with the league's efforts towards this humanitarian issue," the official agency reported. KUNA said the Arab League had provided Kuwait with a report on the outcome of Dr. Mahyoubi's 10-day visit late last month. Kuwait says 625 people, mostly Kuwaitis, remained during Iraq's seven-month occupation and the Gulf war that ended it are still held by Baghdad in defiance of U.N. ceasefire resolutions. Iraq has denied it still holds any such people.



MOURNING: Thousands of mourners Tuesday carry the coffins of six people killed during election-linked violence in Dhaka, Bangladesh. (AFP photo)

Jordan awaits Yemeni team to finalise signing event plans

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan is awaiting the arrival of an official Yemeni delegation later this week to finalise plans for hosting the signing ceremony of a national reconciliation and political reform agreement among Yemeni leaders, informed sources said Tuesday.

They said the delegation would be headed by Deputy Prime Minister Mujahid Abu Shawareb, who will convey a final decision on whether Yemeni leaders had accepted a Jordanian invitation to come to Amman and sign the reconciliation and reform agreement.

Feb. 6 had been set as a tentative date for the signing. President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh have accepted in principle the invitation from His Majesty King Hussein, but other Yemeni politicians had been arguing that the signing of the accord should be held on Yemeni soil, sources in Sanaa said.

While President Saleh, a northern Yemeni leader, is particularly interested in travelling to Amman to sign the accord, Mr. Beedh, whose stronghold is in the south, appears to have left the decision to the mediating committee, they added.

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid is offering to host the signing at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, reports said.

Dr. Abdul Meguid telephoned both President Saleh in Sanaa, and Mr. Beedh in Aden to extend the invitation, the reports said.

Several Arab and non-Arab leaders, including King Hussein, were involved in the mediation efforts that produced the reconciliation and reform agreement to end a seven-month political crisis between President Saleh and Mr. Beedh.

A Yemeni committee of mediators drafted the accord and both the president and vice-president have accepted it as a blueprint for the future political and economic course for their country.

Some influential Yemeni political leaders are insisting that the signing of the accord takes place on Yemeni soil since it is a Yemeni national reconciliation and reform agreement, according to Yemeni sources.

The sources also said that the Yemeni leaders wanted to mark the signing of the accord as a national occasion attended by representatives of all Arab as well as friendly foreign countries.

Officials noted that if Amman were to host the ceremony, preparations would have to start immediately in

view of the expected large attendance.

Jordan has also offered its Armed Forces officers to supervise the merger of the armies of the former North and South Yemen. The two Yemens unified in May 1990, but the armies have not been incorporated together as one unit. And this had led to high tension in the run-up to the accord, with both sides accusing each other of threatening military moves.

On Tuesday, Reuters reported from Dubai that the southern army was sending more tanks to a vital oil province in what the news agency described as a signal of "continuing tension" between President Saleh and Mr. Beedh.

But the sources in Sanaa said the tank movements, as reported by travellers quoted in the report, were going on for several days and were not part of any possible confrontation.

Beedh contacts King

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Mr. Beedh telephoned King Hussein on Monday and discussed "Jordan's efforts to overcome the differences between the Yemeni parties in light of the (reconciliation and reform) agreement..." and "Jordan's support for Yemen's democratic and unionist march." It did not elaborate.

Journalist shot dead in Algiers

ALGIERS (Agencies) — A French journalist was killed and an Australian colleague wounded Tuesday while reporting in Algiers' Casbah district. Security forces described it as a "terrorist attack."

They were latest of dozens of foreigners killed, wounded or kidnapped since militants declared last fall that foreigners would be an assassination target as part of a two-year-old insurgency against the military backed government.

The two journalists, working for the Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC), were shot on assignment in the Casbah, an old, alley filled neighbourhood that is a stronghold of militant fundamentalists.

Olivier Quemener, 34, died soon after reaching a hospital, officials said. His Australian colleague, Scott Allan White, 35, was reported in serious condition. Further details were

not immediately available.

The attack occurred a day after Algeria's Defence Minister Lamine Zeroual, took office as president. He vowed to keep fighting militants while also offering a dialogue to end the insurgency.

Hours before the swearing-in ceremony, Rachid Tiziri, head of economic policy for the opposition Rally for Culture and Democracy, was killed by attackers who slit his throat outside his home, his family said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Mr. Tiziri's killing or the attack on the journalists. But they appeared to be part of the low level civil war that has claimed 3,000 lives since an army coup stopped fundamentalists from winning multiparty legislative elections in January 1992.

A spokesman in exile for the Algerian fundamentalist move-

ment the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) said the movement had not yet taken a position on Mr. Zeroual.

Rabah Kebir, in remarks published in the London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat Tuesday, said: "We cannot say that what happened (the appointment of Zeroual) is positive or negative. We are not concerned with personalities."

"What matters is Mr. Zeroual's subsequent policies. When those become clear, then we can judge."

On Sunday Mr. Kebir attacked the Algerian government, saying that it had no legitimacy and that its days were numbered.

An Algerian state-owned newspaper on Tuesday lashed out at Iran for "interference," apparently replying to Iran's criticism of President Zeroual.

Clinton: Iraqi nuclear project out of business

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton said Monday the Iraqi nuclear weapons programme was "out of business" for now, but the world had to keep watching because Iraq wanted to rebuild its weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Clinton made the statements in a report to Congress, which required the president to keep it informed of events in Iraq, as part of its resolution three years ago authorising the use of force in the Gulf war.

"The U.N. Special Commission on Iraq and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have effectively put the Iraqi nuclear weapons programme out of business in the near term," Mr. Clinton's report, sent as a letter to the leaders of the House of Representatives and Senate, said.

But he said the international community must continue its efforts to establish a long-term monitoring regime that was required by U.N. Security Council Resolution 715.

Iraq has said it is ready to comply, but it still must take "significant steps," the president said, including providing data about its weapons suppliers and accepting a monitoring programme for a sustained

period. "Continued vigilance is necessary because we believe that Saddam Hussein is committed to rebuilding his weapons of mass destruction capability, especially nuclear weapons," Mr. Clinton said.

The president went through a long litany of examples of Iraqi non-compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions and defiance of the Gulf war coalition forces.

He said on Dec. 22, Iraqi military forces attacked a four-vehicle coalition military convoy near the Faydah checkpoint. It was the first time Iraqi forces had fired directly on coalition forces since the Gulf war.

"We, along with the British and the French, issued a demarche to the Iraqi government, warning Baghdad that a repetition of the incident would have consequences," Mr. Clinton said.

He said Iraq's use of aircraft against its population in the southern part of the country had stopped since the U.N. declared "no-fly" zones there, but that Iraqi forces had stepped up their use of land-based artillery to shell marsh villages. Iraq also continued to try to disrupt humanitarian aid to the people of northern Iraq.

Aided militia to hold fire despite U.S. 'attack'

NAIROBI (Agencies) — Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aided's faction on Tuesday pledged to uphold a ceasefire with U.S. forces despite what it termed an unprovoked American attack that killed at least eight Somalis.

In a statement released in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, where General Aided is reportedly holding talks with rival faction leaders, his Somali National Alliance (SNA) said at least 16 people had been killed and 14 wounded in the firefight between U.S. troops and Somali gunmen in Mogadishu on Monday.

At least eight people were killed in the brief battle and 25 injured, including women and children, an official of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Tuesday in Mogadishu.

The SNA dismissed an explanation by the U.S. charge d'affaires in Mogadishu, Stevenson McIlvaine, who said the clash had started when Somalis opened fire on Marines escorting U.S. officials to a meeting with SNA

representatives, as "outrageous and unacceptable."

The faction urged "the Somali people to continue observing the ceasefire" despite the "killing of innocent civilians" which it said was "totally unjustified and an act of barbarity."

Blasts hit Somali town

Explosions rocked the buildings of two relief agencies in the Somali town of Baidoa Tuesday, wounding a Colombian and a Somali working for the U.S. Christian charity World Vision, aid officials said.

Four relief agencies evacuated some of their staff in what one aid official described as a protest against deteriorating security in the inland town.

One injured man, described as a veteran Colombian relief worker, was being evacuated to Nairobi for treatment after a pipe bomb blew out a wall of World Vision's compound, scattering rubble, aid staff told Reuters.

State Department nominee accused of anti-Israel bias

The Jerusalem Post

A NEW JERSEY congressman yesterday accused Strobe Talbott, President Bill Clinton's nominee to be the No. 2 official in the State Department, of anti-Israel bias and urged him to withdraw his nomination.

At a Capitol Hill press conference, Rep. Jim Saxton accused Talbott, the White House's nominee to succeed the ousted Clinton Wharton as deputy secretary of state, of holding "strong anti-Israeli views" that disqualify him for the job.

Talbott, said Saxton, "has placed the blame for instability in the Middle East at the feet

of the Israelis and would cut U.S. aid to Israel. It defies reason that President Clinton would designate him to a position which will wield so much influence in precisely those areas."

The Zionist Organisation of America, which joined Saxton in calling for Talbott to withdraw, produced an eight-page collection of excerpts from Talbott's essays in Time magazine that it said represented his "unusually harsh" language about Israel.

Talbott could not be reached for comment.

A State Department spokesman said only: "We will not dignify that charge with a response."

Princess Masako pregnant... maybe

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's imperial family is maintaining a royal silence on mounting speculation that Princess Masako, the brilliant diplomat who married the heir to the throne last year, is pregnant. For weeks, gossip columnists have stalked rumours concerning Princess Masako's condition, undaunted by the wall of stony silence from the imperial household. In its latest edition, the weekly magazine Women claims to have identified a trend in royal cover-ups of pregnancies, drawing the inevitable conclusion that the princess will deliver a heir before the year is out. "A cold or a pregnancy?" asked the magazine, referring to a health problem that has kept the princess out of the public eye so far this year. The magazine was swift to point out that the imperial household stage-managed a cover-up in 1991 when Princess Kiko, wife of Prince Aya, was pregnant. Princess Kiko had a "cold," the household said, when she missed foreign trips and royal duties. The precedent was set as a generation ago when the imperial court cloaked the fact that

Princess Michiko, now the empress, was expecting her first child in 1959. The same imperial "cold" has kept Princess Masako, 30, away from several public engagements since the beginning of the year, the magazine said. Though a commoner, Princess Masako, daughter of a diplomat and a daughter of a promising member of the diplomatic corps, married Prince Naruhito in June last year.

Japan court says 'yes' to devil of a name

TOKYO (R) A Japanese father won a court battle Tuesday with local authorities who refused to register his baby son's name as Devil. The 30-year-old Tokyo man stunned the nation last year when, casting about for a memorable name for his first-born, he finally settled on Akuma (Devil). On Tuesday the Tokyo Family Court ordered the local ward office to register the name. "The name Akuma constitutes an abuse of naming rights. But once it was accepted, legal procedures would be needed to cross it off," the court said. At first the local ward office had agreed to register the name, but it went back on the decision after consulting the Justice Ministry.

The ministry decided the name was inappropriate and would lay the child open to future mockery and discrimination. When officials started pressuring the proud parent to change his boy's name, he appealed to the family court. Justice Minister Akira Mitsuoki declined to comment on Tuesday's court decision. Few rules exist governing the choice of Japanese names, although there are some restrictions on the Chinese ideograms that can be used.

Clinton's give reporters the slip

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton said he occasionally does slip out of the White House without the press in tow, while a magazine reported Hillary Clinton sometimes sneaks out in disguise.

Asked if he felt cloistered in the White House, Mr. Clinton said, "oh, yes. I do. I wish it weren't so." The president traditionally does not travel outside the White House without a small group, or pool of journalists. Mr. Clinton said sometimes he does break away without the press, but that they eventually track him down. "Once I went running when the press has gone home but I think they found me before it was over," he said. "And then when I was home for my mother's funeral, you know, I went out in the town there. I went to my old high school. But the press found me."

Asked about a Time magazine report that said he had slipped out of the White House with Secret Service agents but without the press pool about six times last year, Mr. Clinton said "I don't think so." He suggested instead: "A lot of times you'd like to dump me."

The magazine also reported that Hillary Clinton slips past reporters and photographers with the help of disguises, an assertion that her spokeswoman Lisa Caputo denied.